THE WORKS
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

IN TEN VOLUMES
VOLUME I

TALES OF THE GROTESQUE
AND
ARABESQUE

I

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EDGAR A. POE.

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C. T. Copeland

THE WORKS

OF

EDGAR ALLAN POE

NEWLY COLLECTED AND EDITED, WITH A MEMOIR, CRITICAL INTRODUCTIONS, AND NOTES, BY EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN AND GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

THE ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ALBERT EDWARD STERNER

IN TEN VOLUMES
VOLUME I

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IN HONOR OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
THIS EDITION
OF THE WORKS OF HER DISTINGUISHED SON
IS DEDICATED

GENERAL PREFACE

THE works of Poe were collected by Dr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, his literary executor, and published in three volumes by J. S. Redfield, New York, 1850. The edition, thus authorized, was protected until lately by copyrights owned by the publisher, and has remained substantially unchanged in its successive issues, although enlarged in later years; the papers added and the few corrections made under the stimulus of the English editions of Mr. J. H. Ingram, should, perhaps, be specially referred to; but the edition is practically as Griswold left it, and should be known by his name. It was good enough for its own time; and, in view of the contemporary uncertainty of Poe's fame, the difficulty of obtaining a publisher, and the fact that the editorial work was not paid for, little fault can justly be found with Griswold, who did secure what Poe in his life-time could never accomplish,—a tolerably complete collected edition

of the tales, reviews, and poems. But after the lapse of nearly half a century, something more may be exacted from those who have had the custody of a great writer's works, and something more is due from those who care for the literature of the country. Poe's fame has spread as widely through the world as that of any imaginative author of America; and longer neglect of the state of his text would be discreditable to men of letters among us, now that his works have passed by law into the common property of mankind. With this conviction the present edition has been undertaken, in order to ascertain and establish as accurate and complete a text of his permanent writings as the state of the sources now permits.

The editors have been fortunate beyond expectation in the recovery of final corrections by Poe, made on the margin of his published volumes for the purpose of being incorporated in later editions. These manuscript notes are contained in Poe's copies of the "Tales," 1845, and "The Raven, and other Poems," 1845, recently bequeathed by James Lorimer Graham, Esq., to the Century Association, and of "Eureka," now in the possession of William Evarts Benjamin, Esq. The volumes were in Griswold's possession, but the changes indicated were not made by him, and are now for the first time

embodied in the text. Mrs. Whitman's copy of the "Broadway Journal," with slight marginal corrections by Poe, now in the possession of Thomas J. McKee, Esq., has afforded a few verbal changes. The Duane copy of the "Southern Literary Messenger," similarly revised by Poe, now in the possession of J. H. Whitty, Esq., has also been collated, but the corrections there made represent an early state of the text. It is believed that these comprise all the extant manuscript sources affecting the final form of the text; and the editors beg here to express their deep sense of obligation to the owners of these documents, invaluable for the establishment of the text, and to thank them for the use of the volumes.

For the body of Poe's works, however, the printed sources are final. In every case, except as mentioned in the NOTES, the editors have had recourse to the original issues, and have collated the various forms of the text in each republication during Poe's life, whether in periodicals or in books; the last form having Poe's authority has been followed, and given as the authentic text. In the prose no attempt has been made to show the nature of Poe's revision, but a complete variorum is given of the poems. The quotations, book-titles, and all expressions in ancient or foreign languages

have been revised with a view solely to accuracy, and references have been more exactly and minutely given than in the original publication; the punctuation, and all that concerns typographical style, has been modified to accord with later usage and taste, and generally the editors have exercised free judgment in all matters not affecting the integrity of the text. Hundreds of errors have been corrected; and, though the editors cannot hope that all the original and accumulated faults have been amended, they have spared no pains to verify whatever was susceptible of any doubt. They desire to thank all who have assisted them in any way, and in addition to the acknowledgments already made particularly to own their obligations and express their gratitude to Messrs. Thomas J. McKee for the right to engrave the portrait that bears his name, and for the free use of his collection of Poeäna, W. M. Griswold for the use of the Poe-Griswold papers from which many extracts are given in the MEMOIR, and Robert Lee Traylor for the right to engrave the Shelton portrait.

In regard to the Tales comprised in the first five volumes of this edition, it is only necessary to add in this place that the main text is, in substance, that of the revision of 1844, which Poe made with the hope of publishing a complete collection in

five volumes, but used only in the "Broadway Journal." The generic title given to the Philadelphia edition of 1840, "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," has been retained, as the characteristic description always in Poe's mind in referring to his Tales; but the whole collection has been separated into a few natural groups. One tale, hitherto included, "The Landscape Garden," being bodily and identically the opening portion of "The Domain of Arnheim," is omitted; and one tale, "The Elk," is here added for the first time. "The Journal of Julius Rodman" is also now in its place among Poe's works. Special prefaces are prefixed to the subsequent general divisions in later volumes, and to them and the NOTES the reader is referred for further detailed information.

THE EDITORS.

NEW YORK, Oct. 28, 1894.

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MEMOIR

MEMOIR

EDGAR ALLAN POE was the grandson of David Poe, a patriot of the Revolution, who established the family name in Maryland, and distinguished it by life-long service to his country. His eldest son, who bore his name, disappointed him by adopting the profession of an actor, and married a fellow-member of the Virginia players, — Mrs. Hopkins, whose husband, a comedian of the same company, had recently died. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Arnold. Her mother, Mrs. Arnold, was an English actress who had emigrated to America and made her first appearance here at Boston, Feb. 12, 1796; but she remarried, and, after a brief interval, passed into an obscurity which concealed her fate. The daughter, whose education had been in the theatre, remained with the players; and she was now, at the time of her second marriage, in 1805, accomplished and attractive in her art. David Poe was not less than twenty-five years old, and she was, perhaps, somewhat younger. In the fall of 1806, they joined the company of the Federal Street Theatre, in Boston, where she had sung her first song in public with her mother ten years before, and for the three following years they made their home in that city. There, on Jan. 19, 1809, was born their second child, Edgar,

the subject of this memoir; an elder son, William, and a younger daughter, Rosalie, were the other offspring of this marriage. The career of the parents was brief and, perhaps, unhappy. They were, at least, poor, and were sometimes in want. The father, though with a natural inclination for the stage, had no success as an actor, and the burden consequently fell upon the mother. She became the leading actress at the Federal Street Theatre; and, as she was commended for her industry and good sense, as well as for her ability, and seems to have sustained with credit her tragic parts and to have been especially attractive in lighter impersonations, it may be concluded that she made the most of her native talents and her opportunities. She was also praised for her moral qualities and domestic virtues. But success did not companion merit in her case; and in the summer after Edgar's birth the family left the city, with grateful memories on her part, as is shown by the lines of her writing in which she bade her son "love Boston, the place of his birth, and where his mother found her best and most sympathetic friends." It is not known when her husband died. Mrs. Poe joined her old friends of the Southern circuit, and after the birth of her third child, Rosalie, she fell into a decline. Early in the winter, in 1811, at Richmond, the family became objects of charity; the actors played twice for their benefit, addressing their card of advertisement "To the Humane;" and, on December 8, the mother died, leaving the three young children destitute. William was sent to his father's kindred in Baltimore; Rosalie was received into the family of Mrs. MacKenzie, and Edgar into that of Mrs. Allan, both of Richmond.

The change of life and prospect thus secured for

Edgar was so great that it might seem worthy of some good fairy. The child of the poor players, before whom, notwithstanding his mother's devotion, there could have been for his youthful years only the necessary circumstances of a continual struggle with poverty in the midst of a wandering life, was given a place privileged with fortune, education, and social breeding, where he should grow to manhood. Mrs. Allan, who was a woman of twenty-five years, showed him, while she lived, true affection; and his precocity and beauty as a child won upon the unwilling heart of her husband so that he soon took pride in the boy to whom he had given his name. Mr. John Allan was by birth a Scotchman, and by trade a tobacco merchant, and had already acquired wealth and social position in Richmond. He was, it would appear, of a somewhat hard nature, even cold, perhaps, in affection; but he was not unjust or sparing, in his treatment of the adopted child. Edgar was brought up as a son of the house. He was early sent to a private school, kept by an old-fashioned dame. When six years old, he could read, draw, and dance; he had a talent for declamation, and is remembered standing between the doors of some Richmond drawing-room and reciting from the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" to a large company, in a sweet voice and with clear enunciation. It is related also that Mr. Allan taught the boy to stand up in a chair at dessert, and pledge the health of the company, which he did with roguish grace. He wore dark curls, and had brilliant eyes; and those who remembered him in Richmond or at the White Sulphur Springs, where the family passed the summers, spoke of the pretty figure he made, with his pony and dogs and his vivacious ways.

In the summer of 1815, Mr. Allan took his family abroad for a long stay; and he placed Edgar at the Manor House School, at Stoke Newington, near London, under Dr. Bransby; but the homelessness of such a life was relieved by weekly Sunday visits which the child made to the Allans, who lived at no great distance, and by the vacations, which he spent with them in travelling, thus seeing, according to his own statement, nearly all parts of the United Kingdom. These five years of English school-days have left little record of themselves, though in later life he sketched the outward aspects of the house and grounds, and drew a portrait of the head-master. He was inducted into the manly sports, as a matter of course, and began to be athletic; he learned to speak French and construe easy Latin, and obtained a knowledge of history and literature said to have been beyond his years; and he showed the scholarly spirit which is noticeable in every account of his youth. Dr. Bransby appears to have remembered most clearly the extravagant amount of his pocket-money. "I liked the boy," he said; "poor fellow, his parents spoiled him." English school-life, in early years, always seems a kind of orphanage; but such as it was, the boy had, perhaps, less to complain of than others. In August, 1820, the Allans returned to Richmond, where they resided during Poe's later schooldays in North Fifth Street till their removal in 1825 to the estate on the corner of Fifth and Main streets. Here Poe could have lived but a few months, and the place first mentioned must be regarded as his Richmond home.

He was immediately put to school again with Master Joseph H. Clarke, an Irishman from Trinity College, Dublin. He continued his French and clas-

sical studies, and acquired proficiency in capping Latin verses and composing English rhymes. He had already shown his poetic instinct, and the master recalled a manuscript volume of verses, addressed to the little girls of Richmond, which Mr. Allan submitted to his judgment with a view to publication; but it is not unlikely that the description of the contents is inaccurate. The lad was a leader of the school in debates, verse-contests, and athletic games, and made an impression upon his mates both by his character and attainments. At the age of fifteen, he began his military career as lieutenant of the Richmond Junior Volunteers, — as appears from communications, signed with his name and rank, from that youthful body of soldiers to the Governor and Council, which still exist in the Executive Archives of Virginia. It was just before this incident that Master Clarke gave way to Master William Burk, and was addressed, on his leave-taking, by the young poet in an English ode.

A younger member of the school, Mr. Andrew Johnston, describes the traits of Poe, in these school days, more distinctly: —

"Poe was a much more advanced scholar than any of us; but there was no other class for him — that being the highest — and he had nothing to do, or but little, to keep his headship of the class. I dare say he liked it well, for he was fond of desultory reading, and even then wrote verses, very clever for a boy of his years, and sometimes satirical. We all recognized and admired his great and varied talents, and were proud of him as the most distinguished schoolboy of the town. At that time, Poe was slight in person and figure, but well made, active, sinewy,

and graceful. In athletic exercises he was foremost: especially, he was the best, the most daring, and most enduring swimmer that I ever saw in the water. When about sixteen years old, he performed his well-known feat of swimming from Richmond to Warwick, a distance of five or six miles. He was accompanied by two boats, and it took him several hours to accomplish the task, the tide changing during the time. In dress he was neat but not foppish. His disposition was amiable, and his manners pleasant and courteous."

Colonel John Preston, also a younger schoolfellow, adds that, notwithstanding, Poe was not the master-spirit or favorite among the boys, partly because he was "self-willed, capricious, inclined to be imperious, and, though of generous impulses, not steadily kind or even amiable," and partly because his mates remembered that he was born of the players and dependent on Mr. Allan's bounty. In these reminiscences, his ardent temperament, which in anger was furious, and the habitual reserve of his nature, together with his ambitious talent and its intellectual and poetic bent, are most prominent. He stood somewhat aloof from all, fond of admiration, but jealous of his place; if he loved any, it was Sully, a nephew of the artist, and also with a touch of the sensibilities of genius. No one seemed to be intimate with him. Impetuous, self-willed, defiant, proud of his powers, and fond of their successful display, he does not appear to have been unamiable or morose, though he was resentful and probably lonely.

A single romantic episode of the time, which, however, should not be allowed to cast too heavy a shadow upon his home, where he received probably more affec-

tionate care than he was aware of, is related by Mrs. Whitman, to whom he told it: —

"While at the academy in Richmond, he one day accompanied a schoolmate to his home, where he saw for the first time Mrs. H —— S——, the mother of his young friend. This lady, on entering the room, took his hand and spoke some gentle and gracious words of welcome, which so penetrated the sensitive heart of the orphan boy as to deprive him of the power of speech, and for a time almost of consciousness itself. He returned home in a dream, with but one thought, one hope in life — to hear again the sweet and gracious words that had made the desolate world so beautiful to him, and filled his lonely heart with the oppression of a new joy. This lady afterwards became the confidant of all his boyish sorrows, and hers was the one redeeming influence that saved and guided him in the earlier days of his turbulent and passionate youth. After the visitation of strange and peculiar sorrows she died, and for months after her decease it was his habit to visit nightly the cemetery where the object of his boyish idolatry lay entombed. The thought of her — sleeping there in her loneliness — filled his heart with a profound, incommunicable sorrow. When the nights were very dreary and cold, when the autumnal rains fell and the winds wailed mournfully over the graves, he lingered longest and came away most regretfully."

This is the earliest of the Lenore legends. The lady, Mrs. Jane Stith Stanard, died April 28, 1824, at the age of thirty-one years. It was, perhaps, in this experience of death, when the boy was fifteen years of age, that the spirit of brooding over the grave first fell upon him. The peculiar melancholy of Poe, in presence of the death of woman, cannot be traced

further to an original motive; and it is reasonable to believe that something, embalmed in this romantic memory, occurred in his heart and life, and vitally awakened his imagination.

This event belongs in the last year of his school life. He studied another year under excellent tutors, and on Feb. 14, 1826, he matriculated at the University of Virginia, entering the schools of ancient and modern languages. He remained until December 15, when the session closed; and he obtained distinction in his final examinations in Latin and French. He had also attended classes in Greek, Spanish, and Italian, and his scholarship was well spoken of by his teachers. In his relations with the University authorities he had a clear record. His private life was that of a student with a careless reputation. He joined with others in the amusements natural to the time. He was more inclined to gambling than drinking, but exhibited in both diversions a peculiar recklessness, indicative of an excitable temperament rather than of pleasure in his cups or the cards. "Poe's passion for strong drink," says one of his fellow-students, "was as marked and as peculiar as that for cards. It was not the *taste* of the beverage that influenced him; without a sip or smack of the mouth he would seize a full glass, without sugar or water, and send it home at a single gulp. This frequently used him up; but, if not, he rarely returned to the charge." He is said to have lost caste with the more aristocratic of his mates by his card-playing. One student remembered hearing him express regret for his extravagance and waste of money during the session, just as he was about to leave for Richmond. He was known to all, however, for other tastes. He

had decorated his room, No. 13 West Range, with large charcoal sketches copied from an illustrated edition of Byron, and here he would relate to his companions some tale, or declaim some poem, of his invention. He remained solitary and reserved, and found pleasure in tramping amid the wild scenes of the neighboring country. His spirit had declared itself, both in character and talent; and when Mr. Allan came down to inquire into affairs, toward the close of the session, he found the youth of seventeen with a mind and resolution of his own, and with qualities so blended in him that his right guardianship might have taxed a far wiser hand and a more delicate and tender touch. Mr. Allan flatly refused to honor the youth's gambling debts, amounting to twenty-five hundred dollars; and, on his return to Richmond, placed him in the counting-room, doubtless meaning that he should follow a commercial career. It was, perhaps, only an added irritation to find that the young lady, Miss Sarah Elmira Royster, who was the first mistress of his affections, and had been the object of his sketches, letters, and verse, was married to another.

Poe resolved on flight and an adventurous course. Whatever his original plan may have been, he is next found in Boston, where he enlisted as a private in the army of the United States, May 26, 1827, under the name of Edgar A. Perry. He was eighteen, but he gave his age as twenty-two; he stated that he was by occupation a clerk; and the record adds that he had gray eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion, and was five feet eight inches in height. He was assigned to Battery H, of the First Artillery, then on duty in the harbor at Fort Independence, and

there he spent the summer. He had also made a venture in literature, and published towards August his first work, "Tamerlane and other Poems, by a Bostonian," — a small thin pamphlet, issued from the press by Calvin F. S. Thomas, a poor youth of nineteen, who had just set up a job printing-office, and who seems to have begun and ended his career as a publisher with this then insignificant but now famous little book. The edition was obscure, and was noticed only by advertisements of its receipt in two leading magazines. There were nine short poems, besides "Tamerlane," in the pamphlet, but they were too crude to make any impression. The author probably conducted the affair under an assumed name, as the printer seems never to have identified him as the poet of later years. In the fall, Poe was transferred with the Battery to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, S. C., and a year afterwards to Fortress Monroe, Va. He was company clerk and assistant in the commissariat department, and on Jan. 1, 1829, was promoted for merit to be Sergeant-Major. Official reports show that he discharged his duties satisfactorily, and won the regard of his superiors, who, when the occasion arose, interested themselves to aid him in regaining his proper position in life.

At what time and in what way he made his situation known to the Allans has not been told; but, at the beginning of the year 1829, Mrs. Allan was lying on her death-bed, and she is said to have asked to see him. Leave of absence was granted him, but he did not arrive in Richmond until after her death, which occurred on February 28. He succeeded in effecting a reconciliation with Mr. Allan, to the extent of the latter's engaging to provide a substitute for him in the army, and to place him, if possible, in West Point.

On April 15, Poe was thus discharged, on the recommendation of his colonel, and with letters from his officers in which his good character and conduct are vouched for, and his freedom from habits of intoxication is specially mentioned. Mr. Allan wasted little time in following up the plan agreed upon, and secured additional letters from the Speaker of the House, the Representative of the Congressional district, and Major John Campbell, while he himself, under date of May 6, also addressed the Secretary of War, asking for the appointment of Poe as a cadet at West Point. One passage of this letter shows plainly how different was Mr. Allan's attitude from that of a man who had received a son back into his home and meant to make him heir, as Poe evidently hoped he would do; it is, moreover, characteristic of the man. "Frankly, Sir," he says, "do I declare that he is no relation to me whatever; that I have many [in] whom I have taken an active interest to promote theirs; with no other feeling than that, every man is my care, if he be in distress. For myself I ask nothing, but I do request your kindness to aid this youth in the promotion of his future prospects." All these letters Poe presented to the Secretary in person, at Washington.

In thus preparing for a military career, Poe had not forgotten his literary hopes. He now began that course of appeal to distinguished men to recognize and advise him, which he continued through life. On the day when Mr. Allan was penning the words which classed Poe as an object of his common charity, William Wirt was also writing a letter in which he advised the young poet to seek some less old-fashioned critic than himself to comment on the poem that had been sent for his perusal. This poem was prob-

ably "Al Aaraaf," the manuscript of which Poe also showed to William Gwynn, a Baltimore editor, who said it was "indicative of a tendency to anything but the business of matter-of-fact life." Poe had stopped at Baltimore, and resided there for some months, making the acquaintance of his blood relations and awaiting his appointment. He apparently had some undefined business relations with Mr. Gwynn, in whose office his relative, Neilson Poe, was employed. In September, John Neal's paper, "The Yankee," published at Boston, contained a reply to "E. A. P. of Baltimore," which shows that Poe had also sought that editor's poetical advice; and in December the same paper published a letter from Poe in which he takes what had been said to him with good grace, and appeals youthfully but sincerely for recognition as a brother-poet. He states that he is about to publish a volume, and at the close of the year it was issued at Baltimore. This was "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems," and bore the author's name. It contained a revised form of "Tamerlane," and also of some of the short pieces of his earlier book, and what new poems he had composed in the last two years. He sent it to his friends, and went at the same time to Richmond. Mr. Allan was preparing to marry a second wife, and the effort to provide for Poe by a cadetship was renewed. He was now twenty-one, and therefore ineligible; but Senator Ellis of Mississippi, a younger brother of Mr. Allan's partner, recommended him on the representations, he said, of others, and the letter was acted upon at once. On March 31, Mr. Allan, as guardian, gave his consent to the arrangement, and Poe bound himself to serve the United States for five years. He returned to Baltimore, where

he cultivated literature by making the acquaintance of a new editor, N. C. Brooks, and getting a poem accepted for an annual; and on July 1, 1830, he entered the Military Academy at West Point, settling at No. 28 South Barracks. He entered his age as nineteen years and five months, but he seemed so old that the cadets reported that he had obtained "an appointment for his son, and the boy having died the father had substituted himself in his place."

The impressions he made on his classmates were various. One, who roomed with him, remembered his restless spirit and the harshness of his literary criticism; others knew him best by the satirical squibs he made upon the officers of the Academy; but, though his consumption of brandy and his share in the slight escapades of the barracks are mentioned, he incurred no grave censure until the very end. His life at the University and in the army had taken him out of the school-boy world; and while it would have been convenient to seem younger, he was really older than his years, and was becoming mature in mind through his literary genius. The description of him at this time, by another classmate, General Magruder, is the most complete and truthful: —

"He was very shy and reserved in his intercourse with his fellow-cadets — his associates being confined almost exclusively to Virginians. He was an accomplished French scholar, and had a wonderful aptitude for mathematics, so that he had no difficulty in preparing his recitations in his class and in obtaining the highest marks in these departments. He was a devourer of books, but his great fault was his neglect of, and apparent contempt for, military duties. His wayward and capricious temper made him at times

utterly oblivious or indifferent to the ordinary routine of roll-call, drills, and guard duties. These habits subjected him often to arrest and punishment, and effectually prevented his learning or discharging the duties of a soldier."

Poe soon made up his mind to leave the service. Mr. Allan had been married, Oct. 5, 1830, to Miss Paterson, a lady of thirty; and the dis-adopted son realized the difference that this made in his prospects, if indeed he really continued to expect anything in that quarter. At all events, his desire for a military career, if it was ever genuine, had died out; probably it had been only a ground of compromise with Mr. Allan, and now he was tired of barrack-life again, and ready to risk his chances once more. Poe took his measures accordingly. Pending an adjourned court-martial which would meet on Jan. 28, 1831, he neglected all duties for the two weeks preceding, and was cited to appear on that day to answer charges specifying his remissness and also direct disobedience, on two occasions, to the orders of the officer of the day. He pleaded guilty, except to the charge of absence from parade, roll-call, and guard duty, which was one easily determined from the record; and he was adjudged guilty and sentenced to dismissal, the execution being deferred until March 6, in order that his pay might meet his debts to the Academy; and, on March 7, the sentence having been duly approved by the Secretary of War, he left the Academy, having twelve cents to his credit. He had already arranged to publish, with the subscriptions of the cadets, a new edition of his poems, and he may have occupied himself with this business for a short time in New York. The book, entitled simply "Poems," with the author's name and

dated 1831, duly appeared in that city, with a dedication to the cadets and a list of contents disappointing to those who had anticipated seeing a collection of his local squibs. It was made up of revised versions of old, together with some new poems. This was the last incident connected with his military life, and he now again struck out for himself.

He settled at Baltimore, and sought employment of Mr. Gwynn, the editor, and, later, as a school-teacher, but without success. Whether the annuity which he had received from Mr. Allan was now continued is uncertain; but the birth of a son, who would inherit the Allan name, and with it the fortune to which Poe had looked forward as his own, must have made his position serious in his own eyes. He lived in a solitary way with his father's widowed sister, Mrs. Clemm, and her only surviving child, Virginia; and such reminiscences as remain of the years that elapsed till Mr. Allan's death show that his circumstances were those of poverty and his associates few. Among the latter was one who has given an account of a flirtation with herself and an offer of marriage, which ended in the lover's throwing at her feet a cowhide with which he had chastised her uncle, who opposed the match and had written him a disagreeable letter. She relates that for the period of a year, during which she saw him constantly, he was sober except on one occasion, and it was his conduct on that occasion which terminated the courtship. His life, with these diversions, was one of waiting for better times.

The first turn in Poe's fortunes took place on Oct. 12, 1833, when "The Saturday Visiter" — a weekly literary paper of the city — announced that a prize of one hundred dollars, which had been offered for the

best tale sent in to it, had been awarded to him. The judges in this contest were Dr. James H. Miller, J. H. B. Latrobe, and John P. Kennedy, and the successful tale was the "MS. Found in a Bottle." It was not written for the occasion, but was one of several, entitled "Tales of the Folio Club," bound in a small quarto volume, and written in the beautiful chirography of all Poe's manuscripts, but with especial care. A second prize, for the best poem, would also have been awarded to him, for "The Coliseum," had he not gained the first. This incident secured him the attention of these gentlemen; and of them, Kennedy in particular took interest in the writer and served him with such kindness that Poe declared he was "indebted to him for life itself." Meanwhile, the editor of the paper, L. A. Wilmer, became Poe's companion in walks and conversation, and saw few signs of bad habits in him; but this acquaintance was soon broken off by Wilmer's departure from the city, and no permanent improvement seems to have been made in Poe's circumstances.

The expression of deep gratitude to Kennedy, quoted above, probably refers to events just subsequent to the death of Mr. Allan, which occurred March 27, 1834. Poe was aware of his illness, and went to Richmond to seek a last interview, and perhaps to make a last appeal. He was not recognized by Mrs. Allan; and, on being told that her husband was forbidden to see any one, he pushed by her and went directly to Mr. Allan's chamber. On his entrance, Mr. Allan raised the cane which he used to walk with, and, threatening to strike him if he came within reach, ordered him out. Poe obeyed the command. Upon what grounds Mr. Allan's conduct rested for justifica-

tion, other than such as have been stated, remains undivulged. Poe must have learned without surprise that nothing was left him by will. Six months later, he wrote to Kennedy with regard to the "Tales of the Folio Club," which he had sent to Carey and Lea of Philadelphia, and the tone indicates that this was the first time that he had directly mentioned his poverty:

"I have a favor to beg of you which I thought it better to ask in writing, because, sincerely, I had not courage to ask it in person. I am indeed too well aware that I have no claim whatever to your attention, and that even the manner of my introduction to your notice was at the best equivocal. Since the day you first saw me, my situation in life has altered materially. At that time I looked forward to the inheritance of a large fortune, and, in the mean time, was in receipt of an annuity for my support. This was allowed me by a gentleman of Virginia (Mr. John Allan) who adopted me at the age of two years (both my parents being dead), and who, until lately, always treated me with the affection of a father. But a second marriage on his part, and I dare say many follies on my own, at length ended in a quarrel between us. He is now dead, and has left me nothing. I am thrown entirely upon my own resources, with no profession and very few friends. Worse than all this, I am at length penniless. Indeed, no circumstances less urgent would have induced me to risk your friendship by troubling you with my distresses. But I could not help thinking that if my situation was stated — as you could state it — to Carey and Lea, they might be led to aid me with a small sum in consideration of my manuscript now in their hands. This would relieve my immediate wants, and I could then look forward more confidently

to better days. At all events receive the assurance of my gratitude for what you have already done."

In consequence of Kennedy's kind offices, the Philadelphia publishers arranged to print one of the tales in an annual, edited by Miss Leslie, and sent fifteen dollars to be given to Poe. A few months later in March, 1835, he reached the lowest point of his fortunes, and, humiliated by being obliged to decline an invitation from Kennedy to dine with him, because of his "personal appearance," he asked for a loan of twenty dollars, with which to make himself presentable. On this, Kennedy took up his cause still more warmly, gave him what he needed, and treated him as a personal friend, while at the same time he advised him to seek employment of T. W. White, who had just established "The Southern Literary Messenger," and himself cordially recommended him. From this time his affairs began to mend.

Poe soon made himself useful to Mr. White, and showed great and intelligent interest in the new magazine. He sent reviews and tales, and also advice. In May, he had a severe attack of illness, and was somewhat incapacitated, but recovered, and worked to such good purpose that Mr. White invited him to come to Richmond and assist him in the office. He accepted the offer with expressions of gratitude for the opportunity of employment, however humble and little it might be; and in the summer he returned to the city, which had so long been his home, to reside.

While still at Baltimore, Poe had become deeply attached to Mrs. Clemm, who had taken motherly care of him, and to her daughter, Virginia, who was even now hardly more than a child. The three wished to remain together and continue to make one home;

and it was arranged that Mrs. Clemm and Virginia should follow him to Richmond, with the understanding that he should marry Virginia. She was only thirteen years old, and he was twenty-six; and, on the engagement being made known to their relatives, Neilson Poe, who stood in the same degree of cousinhood to both parties, offered to take Virginia into his home and care for her until she should be eighteen, when, if she wished, she should be free to marry her cousin Edgar. He violently remonstrated, and returning to Baltimore, took out a marriage license, September 22, and is said to have been then married to her at Old Christ Church by the Rev. John Johns, and to have returned at once to Richmond. This is alleged on the authority of Mrs. Clemm; and though in the absence of any entry in the church records, which were badly kept, and of the return of the officiating clergyman to the civil authorities, there is room for doubt, it is improbable that Mrs. Clemm was mistaken in her recollection. Some collateral circumstances must, however, be taken into the account.

By this time, whatever may have been the cause, Poe had contracted a habit of intoxication, which rendered him incapable during its indulgence, and left him, on his return to soberness, a wretched penitent. It was this which principally threatened his prosperity, after joining with Mr. White in the management of the magazine, — a business for which he had great aptitude, and to which he was through life devoted. Whether Mr. White was warned by Kennedy, who probably knew the facts, or was left to his own experience, within a few weeks after Poe came to Richmond he learned all there was to know in respect to this defect in his assistant. The first outbreak was, per-

haps, induced by anxiety in regard to the promised marriage; and it may have been only this latter trouble which occasioned the extraordinary appeal to Kennedy, which, in view of Poe's brightened circumstances, seems so inexplicable, and has always had a significant place in his memoir. This letter was dated Sept. 11, 1835, and is as follows: —

"I received a letter yesterday from Dr. Miller, in which he tells me you are in town. I hasten, therefore, to write you, and express by letter what I have always found it impossible to express orally — my deep sense of gratitude for your frequent and ineffectual assistance and kindness. Through your influence Mr. White has been induced to employ me in assisting him with the editorial duties of his magazine at a salary of five hundred and twenty dollars per annum. The situation is agreeable to me for many reasons, — but alas! it appears to me that nothing can now give me pleasure or the slightest gratification. Excuse me, my dear sir, if in this letter you find much incoherency. My feelings at this moment are pitiable, indeed. I am suffering under a depression of spirits, such as I have never felt before. I have struggled in vain against the influence of this melancholy; *you will believe* me, when I say that I am still miserable in spite of the great improvement in my circumstances. I say you will believe me, and for this simple reason, that a man who is writing for *effect* does not write *thus*. My heart is open before you — if it be worth reading, read it. I am wretched, and know not why. Console me, — for you can. But let it be quickly, or it will be too late. Write me immediately. Convince me that it is worth one's while — that it is at all necessary

to live, and you will prove yourself indeed my friend. Persuade me to do what is right. I do mean this. I do not mean that you should consider what I now write you a jest. Oh, pity me! for I feel that my words are incoherent; but I will recover myself. You will not fail to see that I am suffering under a depression of spirits which will ruin me should it be long continued. Write me then, and quickly — urge me to do what is right. Your words will have more weight with me than the words of others, for you were my friend when no one else was. Fail not as you value your peace of mind hereafter."

A postscript to this letter gives some messages from Mr. White, in the ordinary style, and contains the information that he is willing to print the "Tales of the Folio Club" for Poe, if the Philadelphia firm, Carey and Lea, will permit the use of their name as publishers. Mr. Kennedy replied on September 19, as follows:

"I am sorry to see you in such plight as your letter shows you in. It is strange that just at this time, when everybody is praising you, and when fortune is beginning to smile upon your hitherto wretched circumstances, you should be invaded by these blue devils. It belongs, however, to your age and temper to be thus buffeted — but be assured it only wants a little resolution to master the adversary forever. You will doubtless do well henceforth in literature, and add to your *comforts*, as well as to your reputation, which it gives me great pleasure to assure you is everywhere rising in popular esteem."

He added some suggestions for literary work, charged himself with the correspondence in respect to the "Tales," and ended with a request that Poe would write to him frequently.

Three days later, as has been seen, Poe was in Baltimore, and took out the marriage license. He did not, however, return at once to Richmond, as, one week later, Mr. White addressed him the following letter from that city under date of September 29:

"Would that it were in my power to unbosom myself to you in language such as I could on the present occasion wish myself master of. I cannot do it — and therefore must be content to speak to you in my plain way. That you are sincere in all your promises I firmly believe. But, Edgar, when you once again tread these streets, I have my fears that your resolve would fall through, and that you would again sip the juice, even till it stole away your senses. Rely on your own strength, and you are gone! Look to your Maker for help, and you are safe! How much I regretted parting with you is unknown to any one on this earth except myself. I was attached to you — and am still — and willingly would I say return, if I did not dread the hour of separation very shortly again.

"If you could make yourself contented to take up your quarters in my family or in any other private family where liquor is not used, I should think there were hopes of you. But if you go to a tavern, or to any other place where it is used at table, you are not safe. I speak from experience.

"You have fine talents, Edgar — and you ought to have them respected as well as yourself. Learn to respect yourself, and you will very soon find that you are respected. Separate yourself from the bottle, and bottle-companions, forever! Tell me if you can and will do so, and let me hear that it is your fixed purpose never to yield to temptation. If you should

come to Richmond again, and again should be an assistant in my office, it must be especially understood by us that all engagements on my part would be dissolved, the moment you get drunk. No man is safe that drinks before breakfast. No man can do so and attend to business properly."

Such are the circumstances which surrounded the first marriage of Poe to his young cousin, if it in fact then took place. In a few weeks Mrs. Clemm and Virginia arrived in Richmond, and the little family was again united. It was proposed that Mrs. Clemm should keep a boarding-house, and Poe endeavored with some success to borrow from their relatives to make up the necessary capital. He was married to his cousin publicly on May 16, 1836, at the house where they all lived, by the Rev. Amasa Converse, a Presbyterian minister. The oath taken by Poe's surety, Thomas Cleland, was that "Virginia E. Clemm is of the full age of twenty-one years." Her mother was present, and gave her consent freely. The bride was, in fact, just under fourteen. It was now proposed that Mrs. Clemm should rent a house from Mr. White, and board his family as well as her own, but the scheme was abandoned. These plans, however, had occasioned considerable expense, and in June Poe applied to Mr. Kennedy for a loan of one hundred dollars to meet a note, which he said was his only debt.

Poe's worldly situation was now satisfactory to himself, and his letters were bright with the hopes inspired by his success. As early as January 22 of this year, he had written to Kennedy with much gratitude as follows: —

"Although I have never yet acknowledged the receipt of your letter of advice some months ago, it was

not without great influence upon me. I have since then fought the enemy manfully, and am now in every respect comfortable and happy. I know you will be pleased to hear this. My health is better than for years past, my mind is fully occupied, my pecuniary difficulties have vanished. I have a fair prospect of future success — in a word, all is right. I shall never forget to whom all this happiness is, in a great degree, to be attributed. I know that without your timely aid I should have sunk under my trials. Mr. White is very liberal, and besides my salary of five hundred and twenty dollars pays me liberally for extra work, so that I receive nearly eight hundred dollars. Next year, that is, at the commencement of the second volume, I am to get one thousand dollars. Besides this, I receive from publishers nearly all new publications. My friends in Richmond have received me with open arms, and my reputation is extending — especially in the South. Contrast all this with those circumstances of absolute despair in which you found me, and you will see how great reason I have to be grateful to God — and to yourself."

To this Kennedy replied with his usual kindly cordiality: —

"Your letter assures me that you have entirely conquered your late despondency. I am rejoiced at this. You have a pleasant and prosperous career before you, if you subdue this brooding and boding inclination of your mind. Be cheerful; rise early, work methodically — I mean at appointed hours. Take regular recreation every day. Frequent the best company only. Be rigidly temperate both in body and mind — and I will insure you at a moderate premium all the success and comfort you want."

Poe had every reason to regard his future with confident eyes. He had made a striking editorial success. His tales won him repute as an imaginative and bizarre writer; and his criticisms, vigorous, pointed, and downright, woke the echo, north and south, wherever books and magazines made their way in the reading of the land. He became popular as a story-writer and hated as a critic, and was at least known in all quarters. The magazine rapidly increased its circulation; and friends, such as Beverly Tucker of Virginia, and James K. Paulding of New York, were ready with praise and also with wise counsel for the young newcomer, who was so free with his lance. His reputation as a fearless critic overshadowed his merit as a story-writer and poet, and yet, except upon occasions, he was not so savage as he was thought. Sometimes his contempt was shown by the very lightness of his stroke. He was, too, in these first days, just, according to his canons, if at times insolently just. There can be no doubt that he meant what he said, and had neither fear nor favor, though naturally desirous to make the most of the authors of the South in their competition with their countrymen of the more fortunate parallels to the northward. He was exposed to some retaliation in interested New York journals, and the Harpers declined, as Carey and Lea had done, to publish his tales, which Paulding had sent to them on his behalf; but such incidents were not reverses, hardly even delays, in themselves: he might well wait and feel secure, since he had made the country listen, had carried his magazine on a flood-tide, and was full of new inventions; and then, all at once, he failed.

In the first number of the "Messenger" for 1837, it was announced that Poe's connection with the maga-

zine would cease with that issue. The explanation was truly given by Kennedy, his best friend, — "he was irregular, eccentric, and querulous, and soon gave up his place." The words are transparent. The extant correspondence shows that Mr. White felt justified in his course, and followed it with as much kindness as the circumstances permitted. Poe, who had begun the "Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," left it unfinished, and went to New York, where he is said to have been invited to contribute to the "New York Review," for which he did write one article with some assistance from Dr. Charles Anthon, of Columbia College. He arrived in the city at some time before June, 1837, and settled at 113½ Carmine Street. Of his life in the city little is known beyond the fact that Mrs. Clemm kept boarders, one of whom, William Gowans, has borne testimony to Poe's soberness and courtesy during eight months of association with him. In midsummer of 1838, the "Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym" was published by the Harpers, and achieved the honors of piracy in England. Immediately on its issue, Poe removed to Philadelphia, where he continued to reside for nearly six years.

He was now a hackwriter for the booksellers, magazines, and annuals; but the ambition to own a magazine was his dominant motive from this time to the end of his life. He contributed one of his most famous tales, "Ligeia," and, later, one of his best poems, "The Haunted Palace," to the "American Museum" of Baltimore. He also wrote for the "Baltimore Book," an annual, the "Pittsburgh Examiner," a short-lived publication, and the "United States Military Magazine," a subscription publication. His first comparatively important work was "The Conchologist's

First Book," issued in 1839, which drew upon him the charge of plagiarism. The fact appears to be that Poe was selected to father a cheaper form of Wyatt's "Conchology," which the Harpers, who were Wyatt's publishers, had declined to have made, sufficiently altered to escape a suit under the copyright laws, and which Wyatt himself offered for sale after his lectures. The "Introduction" is a paraphrase of Brown's "Text-Book" on the same subject, unless both Brown and Poe were indebted to one textual source, a most unnecessary hypothesis; and the remainder is openly from Wyatt and Cuvier. The affair appears, therefore, to have been in the main a case of collusion between Wyatt and Poe to outwit the Harpers. It was possibly this incident, and not anything connected directly with the publication of "Arthur Gordon Pym," to which the Harpers referred at a later time, when they declined to publish Poe's collected tales on the ground of some difficulty they had experienced with the author. Poe was also accredited with a share in a similar book, a translation and digest of Le Monnier's "Natural History," published under Wyatt's name; in noticing it, he said he spoke "from personal knowledge and the closest inspection and collation," but further than that his part in it is unknown. In 1839, also, he established relations with the newspaper press of Philadelphia, in which he printed some light tales. In these ways he made himself acquainted in the city, and seems to have soon become a familiar figure to its writers and editors.

In the spring of 1839, he made some offer to William E. Burton, the comedian, who was also editor and owner of the "Gentleman's Magazine,"

now in its second year. On May 10, Burton replied: —

"I have given your proposal a fair consideration. I wish to form some such engagement as that which you have proposed, and know of no one more likely to suit my views than yourself. The expenses of the magazine are already wofully heavy; more so than my circulation warrants. I am certain that my expenditure exceeds that of any publication now extant, including the monthlies which are double in price. Competition is high — new claimants are daily rising. I am therefore compelled to give expensive plates, thicker paper, and better printing than my antagonists, or allow them to win the goal. My contributors cost me something handsome, and the losses upon credit, exchange, etc., are becoming frequent and serious. I mention this list of difficulties as some slight reason why I do not close with your offer, which is indubitably liberal, without any delay.

"Shall we say ten dollars per week for the remaining portion of this year? Should we remain together, which I see no reason to negative, your proposition shall be in force for 1840. A month's notice to be given on either side previous to a separation. Two hours a day, except occasionally, will, I believe, be sufficient for all required, except in the production of any article of your own. At all events you could easily find time for any other light avocation — supposing that you did not exercise your talents in behalf of any publication interfering with the prospects of the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' I shall dine at home to-day at three. If you will cut your mutton with me, good. If not, write or see me at your leisure."

This arrangement was accepted, and in July Poe's name appeared as associate editor of that periodical. During the remainder of the year, the work done by him exclusively for Burton, except numerous reviews of light weight, was but little, but a considerable amount of his other writings was reprinted. Of the original compositions, the only piece that need be mentioned was "The Fall of the House of Usher;" "William Wilson" had appeared in the "Gift" for 1840, and all of his stories, now twenty-five in number, were included in "Tales of the Arabesque and Grotesque," issued in two volumes by Lea and Blanchard at the close of the year, under date of 1840, and widely and favorably noticed. In the first half of the next year, his criticism in the magazine showed greater strength, and he contributed to it anonymously "Julius Rodman."

Some difficulty arose between the editors, of a nature that must be gathered from the following letter of Burton: —

"I am sorry you have thought it necessary to send me such a letter. Your troubles have given a morbid tone to your feelings which it is your duty to discourage. I myself have been as severely handled by the world as you can possibly have been, but my sufferings have not tinged my mind with melancholy, nor jaundiced my views of society. You must rouse your energies, and if care assail you, conquer it. I will gladly overlook the past. I hope you will as easily fulfil your pledges for the future. We shall agree very well, though I cannot permit the magazine to be made a vehicle for the sort of severity which you think 'so successful with the mob.' I am truly much less anxious about making a monthly 'sensation' than

I am upon the point of fairness. You must, my dear sir, get rid of your avowed ill-feelings toward your brother authors. You see I speak plainly; I cannot do otherwise upon such a subject. You say the people love havoc. I think they love justice. I think you yourself would not have written the article on Dawes, in a more healthy state of mind. I am not trammelled by any vulgar consideration of expediency; I would rather lose money than by such undue severity wound the feelings of a kind-hearted and honorable man. And I am satisfied that Dawes has something of the true fire in him. I regretted your word-catching spirit. But I wander from my design. I accept your proposition to re-commence your interrupted avocations upon the magazine. Let us meet as if we had not exchanged letters. Use more exercise, write when feelings prompt, and be assured of my friendship. You will soon regain a healthy activity of mind, and laugh at your past vagaries."

In June, 1840, the engagement with Burton came to a sudden end. The immediate occasion is assigned by Mr. Rosenbach, a companion of Poe. He says that Burton, having an engagement to play in New York, left the magazine in the associate editor's hands, and on returning found that nothing had been done, and he continues: —

"Burton immediately sought my father at his house, and it was about midnight when he found him. He came in a carriage with a large bundle of manuscripts, from which they made some selection. They worked until morning, when they sent me with copy to the printer, Charles Alexander, in Franklin Place, Chestnut Street. Alexander hunted up some extra compositors, and by dint of hard work and hurried proof-

reading, the 'Gentleman's Magazine' appeared as usual. Poe was discharged for his negligence."

But there is no reason to believe that Poe ever cared very much to serve Burton faithfully. His mind was filled with the project of a magazine of his own, and the present engagement was a mere stop-gap. He wrote to Philip Pendleton Cooke, nearly nine months before, on Sept. 21, 1839, "As soon as Fate allows, I will have a magazine of my own, and will endeavor to kick up a dust." The idea was never absent from his mind, and as he knew that Burton was seeking a purchaser, he may have felt fewer scruples. He always spoke of Burton with contempt. On the other hand, Burton referred publicly, in print, to "the infirmities" of his colleague, which had caused him "much annoyance." The testimony of Mr. Alexander, the printer, in a letter to T. C. Clarke, Oct. 20, 1850, is explicit, but it avoids the point, while not concealing the situation: —

"The absence of the principal editor on professional duties left the matter frequently in the hands of Mr. Poe, whose unfortunate failing may have occasioned some disappointment in the preparation of a particular article expected from *him*, but never interfering with the regular publication of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' as its monthly issue was never interrupted upon any occasion, either from Mr. Poe's deficiency, or from any other cause, during my publication of it, embracing the whole time of Mr. Poe's connection with it. That Mr. Poe had faults seriously detrimental to his own interests, none, of course, will deny. They were, unfortunately, too well known in the literary circles of Philadelphia, were there any disposition to conceal them. But he alone was the

sufferer, and not those who received the benefit of his preëminent talents, however irregular his habits or uncertain his contributions may occasionally have been."

Poe gave his own account of the matter in a letter to Dr. Snodgrass, of Baltimore, April 1, 1841: —

"You are a physician, and I presume no physician can have difficulty in detecting the *drunkard* at a glance. You are, moreover, a literary man, well read in morals. You will never be brought to believe that I could write what I daily write, *as* I write it, were I as this villain would induce those who know me not, to believe. In fine, I pledge you, before God, the solemn word of a gentleman, that I am temperate even to rigor. From the hour in which I first saw this basest of calumniators to the hour in which I retired from his office in uncontrollable disgust at his chicanery, arrogance, ignorance, and brutality, *nothing stronger than water ever passed my lips.*

"It is, however, due to candor that I inform you upon what foundation he has erected his slanders. At no period of my life was I ever what men call intemperate. I never was in the *habit* of intoxication. I never drunk drams, etc. But, for a brief period, while I resided in Richmond, and edited the 'Messenger,' I certainly did give way, at long intervals, to the temptation held out on all sides by the spirit of Southern conviviality. My sensitive temperament could not stand an excitement which was an every-day matter to my companions. In short, it sometimes happened that I was completely intoxicated. For some days after each excess I was invariably confined to bed. But it is now quite four years since I have abandoned every kind of alcoholic

drink — four years, with the exception of a single deviation, which occurred shortly *after* my leaving Burton, and when I was induced to resort to the occasional use of *cider* with the hope of relieving a nervous attack."

During the four years which, at the date of this letter, had elapsed since Poe left Richmond, he made an effort to refrain from intoxication, and he wrote to several friends that he had succeeded. James E. Heath, referring to some suspicions that Poe entertained of his old employer, Mr. White, had written from Richmond, Sept. 12, 1839, congratulating him on this change, and giving him encouragement of a kind he never really lacked in his literary work: —

"I have had a conversation with White since the receipt of your letter, and took the liberty to hint to him your convictions of an unfriendly feeling manifested on his part towards you. I am happy to inform you that he disclaims the existence of any unkind feeling; on the contrary, professes that your prosperity and happiness would yield him pleasure. He is not aware of having spoken or written anything with a design to injure you, or anything more in censure or disparagement than what he has said to you in person, when you resided here. I am inclined to think that you entirely mistake the man if you suppose that a particle of malignity lurks in his composition. My long acquaintance with him justifies me in saying that I have known few men more disposed to cherish kindly and benevolent feelings towards their fellowmen than himself. He informs me that he will with pleasure admit a notice of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' in the 'Messenger,' and if possible in the October number. . . .

"It gives me sincere pleasure to understand that your own good sense and the influence of high and noble motives have enabled you to overcome a seductive and dangerous besetment, which too often prostrates the wisest and best by its fatal grasp. The cultivation of such high intellectual powers as you possess cannot fail to earn for you a solid reputation in the literary world. In the department of criticism especially, I know few who can claim to be your superior in this country. Your dissecting-knife if vigorously employed would serve to rid us of much of that silly trash and sickly *sentimentality* with which puerile and conceited authors and gain-seeking booksellers are continually poisoning our intellectual food. I hope in relation to all such you will continue to wield your mace without 'fear, favor, or affection.'"

At the time of this letter, however, and eighteen months before the declaration to Dr. Snodgrass, Poe had begun to fall back into old ways. Unfortunately, as Mr. Alexander says, his faults were too well known. The testimony to them is abundant; and it is plain that there was no time, after the first year of his residence in Philadelphia, when he had not the reputation among those who profess to have been his boon companions, of frequenting drinking-places and becoming intoxicated in all companies. The habit may have been strengthened by his continued disappointments, and it became marked as years went on; but the evidence to its existence and character from the time of his association with Burton is continuous. Poe afterwards assigned his failure to the year 1842, and it may not have seemed to himself that he was in any danger until that time. The illness of his wife, he said, drove him to despair.

He first gave this explanation in a letter to George W. Eveleth, Jan. 4, 1848, who had asked him to hint at "the terrible event," to which he had already publicly referred in a New York paper, as the cause of his excesses. Mr. Eveleth published the passage in a Portland paper soon after Poe's death: —

"Yes, I can do more than hint. This 'evil' was the greatest which can befall a man. Six years ago, a wife, whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever, and underwent all the agonies of her death. She recovered partially, and I again hoped. At the end of a year, the vessel broke again. I went through precisely the same scene. . . . Then again — again — and even once again, at varying intervals. Each time I felt all the agonies of her death — and at each accession of the disorder I loved her more dearly and clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. But I am constitutionally sensitive — nervous in a very unusual degree. I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness I drank — God only knows how often or how much. As a matter of course, my enemies referred the insanity to the drink rather than the drink to the insanity."

The particular cause of the extraordinary effect of these excesses was the fact that Poe was also addicted to the use of opium. At this time, however, 1840, the whole trouble was in its early stages.

On leaving Burton, Poe at once gave his attention to his own project, "The Penn Magazine," which was announced to appear on Jan. 1, 1841, and prospectuses were sent to his friends, and advertisements

solicited. Meanwhile, he began his articles upon "Cryptography," which were a sensation of the hour, in Alexander's "Weekly Messenger;" and when, in October, Burton sold out to George R. Graham, who now founded "Graham's Magazine," Poe maintained terms with the new proprietor, and being obliged, for several reasons, to postpone his own project, he took the editorship of the new periodical, as was publicly announced, Feb. 20, 1841. His first success in this position was the tale of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," which appeared in the number for April, 1841, the first of his editing. He had been led to this new ratiocinative vein, perhaps, by his studies in cryptography, which he had kept up; and he continued to work it, becoming thereby the father of the modern detective novel. He contributed criticism and verse, new and old, to the magazine, and helped to make it the successful venture that it rapidly became. It rose to a circulation of forty thousand, but its conduct was never satisfactory to Poe.

He had by no means abandoned his own plan. "The 'Penn,' I hope, is only 'scotched, not killed,'" he wrote to Dr. Snodgrass in April, and added that it "would unquestionably be resumed hereafter." He was hopeful of persuading Graham to join him in the enterprise. In the early summer, he wrote to Longfellow, Cooper, Kennedy, and others, inviting their co-operation. He continually disapproved Graham's methods, and this discontent with his situation was a constant element in his correspondence. He had made a new and faithful friend in Frederick May Thomas, a forgotten author who held a position under the Government, at Washington; and through him he now endeavored to obtain an appointment in the

Custom House at Philadelphia, by means of Robert Tyler, the son of the President. Thomas gave him all the assistance in his power, and his old friend Kennedy was also interested in the plan, but nothing was accomplished. His connection with "Graham's" ceased on April 1, 1842, and he was succeeded within a month by Rufus W. Griswold. There was no breach between him and his employer. "I shall continue," he wrote to Thomas, May 25, "to contribute occasionally. My reason for resigning was disgust with the namby-pamby character of the magazine,—a character which it was impossible to eradicate. I allude to the contemptible pictures, fashion-plates, music, and love-tales. The salary, moreover, did not pay me for the labor which I was forced to bestow. With Graham, who is really very gentlemanly, although an exceedingly weak man, I had no misunderstanding." To another correspondent, Daniel Bryan, he wrote, July 6, "I have no quarrel with either Mr. Graham or Mr. Griswold, although I hold neither in especial respect. I have much aversion to communicate with them in any way." The only account given by Graham is that Poe, coming back to the office after an unusual absence, found Griswold in his chair, and at once left, and showed no disposition to return. The latter portion of the letter to Mr. Bryan, referred to above, contains a sufficiently clear explanation of the situation: —

"I am making earnest, although *secret* exertions to resume my project of the 'Penn Magazine,' and have every confidence that I shall succeed in issuing the first number on the first of January. You may remember that it was my original design to issue it on the first of January, 1841. I was induced to abandon the project

at that period by the representations of Mr. Graham. He said that if I would join him as a salaried editor, giving up for the time my own scheme, he himself would unite with me at the expiration of six months, or certainly at the end of a year. As Mr. Graham was a man of capital and I had no money, I thought it most prudent to fall in with his views. The result has proved his want of faith and my own folly. In fact I was continually laboring against myself. Every exertion made by myself for the benefit of 'Graham's,' by rendering that magazine a greater source of profit, rendered its owner at the same time less willing to keep his word with me. At the time of our bargain (a verbal one) he had six thousand subscribers; when I left him, he had more than forty thousand. It is no wonder that he has been tempted to leave me in the lurch.

"I had nearly one thousand subscribers with which to have started the 'Penn,' and, with these as a beginning, it would have been my own fault, had I failed. There may be still three or four hundred who will stand by me of the old list, and in the interval between this period and the first of January, I will use every endeavor to procure others. I feel that *now* is the time to strike. The delay, after all, will do me no injury. My conduct of 'Graham's' has rendered me better and (I hope) more favorably known than before. I am anxious above all things to render the journal one in which the *true*, in contradistinction to the merely factitious genius of the country, shall be represented. I shall yield nothing to great names, nor to the circumstances of position. I shall make war to the knife against the New England assumption of 'all the decency and all the talent' which has been

so disgustingly manifested in the Rev. Rufus W. Griswold's 'Poets and Poetry of America.'"

In accordance with the views here described, it was publicly announced in the New York "Mirror," on July 30, 1842, that Poe would revive the projected "Penn;" and he wrote to various correspondents that he hoped to issue the first number the following January.

During the remainder of the year, he contributed to "Graham's" and Snowden's "Lady's Companion," sent a story to the "Boston Miscellany," from which Lowell recovered it for his own "Pioneer," and sought more vigorously the place in the Custom House only to his own vexation and disappointment. His experience, which he related to Thomas, is characteristic:

"Your letter of the 14th gave me new hope — only to be dashed to the ground. On the day of its receipt, some of the papers announced four removals and appointments. Among the latter I observed the name — 'Pogue.' Upon inquiry among those behind the curtain, I soon found that no such person as — 'Pogue' had any expectation of an appointment, and that the name was a misprint or rather a misunderstanding of the reporters, who had heard *my own* name spoken of at the Custom House. I waited two days, without calling on Mr. Smith, as he had twice told me that 'he would send for me, when he wished to swear me in.' To-day, however, hearing nothing from him, I called. I asked him if he had no good news for me yet. He replied, 'No, I am instructed to make no more removals.' At this, being much astonished, I mentioned that I had heard, through a friend, from Mr. Rob Tyler, that he was requested to appoint me. At these words he said roughly — 'From *whom* did you say?' I replied,

from Mr. Robert Tyler. I wish you could have seen the scoundrel, — for scoundrel, my dear Thomas, in your private ear, *he is*, — 'From *Robert* Tyler!' says he — 'Hem! I have received orders from *President* Tyler to make no more appointments, and shall make none.' Immediately afterward, he acknowledged that he had made one appointment *since* these instructions.

"Mr. Smith has excited the thorough disgust of every Tyler man here. He is a whig of the worst stamp, and will appoint none but whigs if he can possibly avoid it. People here laugh at the idea of his being a Tyler man. He is notoriously not such. As for me, he has treated me most shamefully. In my case, there was no need of any political shuffling or lying. I proffered my willingness to postpone my claims to those of political claimants, but he told me, upon my first interview after the election, that if I would call on the fourth day he would swear me in. I called and he was not at home. On the next day I called again and saw him, when he told me that he would send a messenger for me when ready: this without even inquiring my place of residence, showing that he had, from the first, no design of appointing me. Well, I waited nearly a month, when, finding nearly all the appointments made, I again called. He did not even ask me to be seated — scarcely spoke — muttered the words 'I will *send* for you, Mr. Poe' — and that was all. My next and last interview was to-day — as I have just described. The whole *manner* of the man, from the first, convinced me that he would not appoint me if he could help it. Hence the uneasiness I expressed to you when here. Now, my dear

Thomas, this insult is not *to me*, so much as to your friend Mr. Robert Tyler, who was so kind as to promise, and who requested, my appointment.

"It seems to me that the only way to serve me *now* is to lay the matter once again before Mr. Tyler, and, if possible through him, to procure a few lines *from the President*, directing Mr. Smith to give me the place. With these credentials he would scarcely again refuse. But I leave all to your better judgment.

"You can have no idea of the low ruffians and boobies — men, too, without a shadow of political influence or *caste* — who have received office over my head. If Smith had the feelings of a gentleman, he would have perceived that, from the very character of my claim, — by which I mean my *want* of claim, — he should have made my appointment an early one. It was a gratuitous favor intended me by Mr. Rob Tyler, and he (Smith) has done *his* best to deprive this favor of all its grace by delay. I could have forgiven all but the innumerable and altogether *unnecessary* falsehoods with which he insulted my common sense day after day.

"I would write more, my dear Thomas, but my heart is too heavy. You have felt the misery of hope deferred, and will feel for me."

Early in 1843 he had secured a partner, Thomas C. Clarke, owner of the "Saturday Museum," who undertook to join with him in the venture of the new magazine, which, however, was to be known as the "Stylus." The terms of the agreement are given in a letter of Poe to Thomas, Feb. 25, 1843: —

"I have managed *at last* to secure, I think, the great object — a partner possessing ample capital,

and, at the same time, so little self-esteem as to allow me entire control of the editorial conduct. He gives me, also, a half interest, and is to furnish funds for all the business operations — I agreeing to supply, for the first year, the literary matter. This will puzzle me no little, but I must do my best — write as much as possible myself, under my own name and pseudonyms, and hope for the casual aid of my friends, until the first stage of infancy is surpassed. The articles of copartnership have been signed and sealed for some weeks, and I should have written you before, informing you of my good luck, but that I was in hope of sending you, at the same time, a specimen-sheet. Some little delay has occurred in getting it out on account of paper. In the mean time, all arrangements are progressing with spirit."

With this letter Poe also sent an advance copy of the "Saturday Museum," for March 4, which contained the prospectus, and also a life of Poe by H. W. Hirst, one of his Philadelphia acquaintances, which professed to be based on information derived from Mr. White, of the old "Messenger," and Thomas, but in fact furnished by Poe. It was a tissue of misstatement and untruth, and concluded with a reprint of nearly all his poems, except the juvenile pieces, and a publication of extracts from private letters in which he had received the praise of literary men, and in some instances the passages were garbled. In furtherance both of the magazine and of Poe's application for office under the Government, he went early in March to Washington; and the visit became a spree, in consequence of which he lost whatever chance he may have had for an appointment, and feared lest his partner, who was

hastily informed of his illness, should take some alarm. On his return, he found Clarke undisturbed, and he wrote to Richmond offering to buy the list of the old "Messenger," if it was for sale. By June, however, the "Stylus" was abandoned, with Poe's usual complaints of "the imbecility or rather idiocy of my partner." Clarke stated that he had no quarrel with Poe, and that, the money advanced by him having been expended, Poe left with him a story as security for the amount.

In the summer Poe published "The Gold-Bug," in the "Dollar Newspaper," winning thereby a prize of one hundred dollars. He also contributed to newspapers and annuals as well as to "Graham's." In the fall one number of an edition of his "Tales," in parts, was issued. On November 25, he lectured in Philadelphia on "The Poets and Poetry of America;" but he is said to have made an earlier appearance on the platform, in Baltimore, during the summer. In this lecture he openly attacked Griswold, in that kind of criticism which he so well understood, and which he had anonymously practised on the same person earlier in the year in the columns of the "Saturday Museum." He was already on record in the "Boston Miscellany" in a favorable notice of the collection made by Griswold, which he had offered to write, and had been paid for by him. Griswold had just retired from "Graham's," and it is possible that Poe's connection with that magazine became closer, inasmuch as many of the reviews of the winter of 1843 are from his hand. In March, 1844, he published a very laudatory notice of Horne's "Orion," and by this means secured a European connection. During the visit of Dickens to this country

in 1842, Poe had made his acquaintance, having arrested his attention by an earlier review in which he foretold the plot of "Barnaby Rudge," and had charged him with the office of securing a publisher for his tales in London; but Dickens was unsuccessful in the efforts he made to that end. Horne now became a similar intermediary; but he, too, was unable to get what Poe sent him — "The Spectacles" — into any magazine in England. The correspondence, however, continued in a friendly spirit, and was a means of introduction to Mrs. Browning, then Miss Barrett and a friend of Horne.

Poe's literary reputation was now fairly established, notwithstanding his failure to maintain himself by his pen, or to place himself in a secure editorial position. His poetic genius only was not recognized; but he had not published a volume of poems since he came to maturity, and the collection appended to Hirst's life of him could naturally have little effect. As a critic, he had more than held his own, and easily outranked any other writer of reviews, in the opinion both of his fellow-authors and of the public. His favor was courted and his judgment valued, though he was known to err both in severity and commendation when personal feeling entered into his writing, as it often did. As a writer of stories, he could cite the words of many of the leading men of his craft in his favor. Tucker, Kennedy, Paulding, Heath, Irving, Willis, Lowell, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and a host of minor writers in the press, make up the list of well-wishers and appreciative readers; and although his collection of tales, made in 1839, had not succeeded, it had been well noticed at the time, and now the vogue of "The Gold-Bug," "The Murders in the

Rue Morgue," and other later stories had spread his name and given him true popularity. As an editor, the ease with which he obtained positions and made new engagements, and the success of the two magazines he had been most closely connected with, — the "Messenger" and "Graham's," — spoke for his ability; and the conduct of such enterprises he looked on as his special vocation and ambition. He cultivated his reputation, too, by seeking public notice in every part of the country, through his numerous correspondents, and by serving them in return for their good offices. He had made a practice of sending his best work to literary men of eminence, from the beginning, and he was always ready to take pains to make himself known favorably, and to use all methods of affecting public opinion and curiosity. He had succeeded by his genius, and been helped by his own management of his reputation; he met on all sides with the kindest reception, and never had to complain of a lack of appreciation; and several of the elder writers had added to this recognition, which he deserved, their friendship and counsel in private life, seeking to strengthen him in his efforts to retrieve the past and secure the future. It was not on the literary side that he failed in Philadelphia, nor was it from lack of good-will among authors or lukewarmness among friends; material and moral support, as well as literary recognition, had been given to him freely; but notwithstanding he was soon to find it necessary to leave the city.

The external events of Poe's troubled career in Philadelphia, from 1838 to 1844, are covered by what has been related. In person, he is described uniformly as quiet and gentlemanly in manner when he was

sober. Mr. Alexander speaks of the "uniform gentleness of disposition and kindness of heart," which distinguished him; Clarke characterizes him as "a genial, generous friend, invariably kind and gentlemanly to all;" Graham, also, bears testimony to this phase of his nature. F. O. C. Darley, the artist, who was engaged to illustrate the "Stylus" in 1843, draws a more definite picture: —

"He impressed me as a refined and very gentlemanly man; exceedingly neat in his person; interesting always, from the intellectual character of his mind, which appeared to me to be tinged with sadness. His manner was quiet and reserved; he rarely smiled. I remember his reading his 'Gold-Bug' and 'Black Cat' to me before they were published. The form of his manuscript was peculiar; he wrote on half-sheets of note-paper, which he pasted together at the ends, making one continuous piece, which he rolled up tightly. As he read, he dropped it upon the floor. It was very neatly written, and without corrections, apparently."

On the other hand, during this period, Poe had publicly exposed himself to those reports to which his old acquaintance, Wilmer, referred, when he wrote to Mr. Tomlin, in words which Poe violently resented: "Poor fellow, he is not a teetotaler by any means, and I fear he is going headlong to destruction, moral, physical, and intellectual." His appearance and actions, when he was not sober, gave occasion for that different impression of his personality, which it has been hard to reconcile with the recollections of his more considerate associates. In 1841, while he was still with Burton, Mr. Rosenbach says that Poe then spent much leisure time with Hirst, Scott, and himself in a certain drink-

ing-place, and at evening in the lobbies of the theatres, from which they adjourned to restaurants. In 1843, Mr. Rosenbach returned to Philadelphia after an absence, and noticed "signs of continued dissipation," and in 1844 the state of affairs had grown worse. It is not unnatural that this phase of Poe's reputation should have been more notorious and lasting than that which those who were most humane in their judgment have recalled. Poe's use of opium, it is to be remembered, aggravated the case, and the spells of illness, to which he was subject, were severe; but, throughout, however he may have been known publicly to those who were only friends by chance, he had, at least, a home in which he was fondly and patiently cared for; and of this home some glimpses remain.

Mrs. Clemm, a vigorous woman of fifty, was the head of the family, and took care of its affairs. The house, No. 234 North Seventh Street, above Spring Garden, was a cottage surrounded by vines and ornamented in winter with flowers. Mayne Reid speaks of it as "a lean-to, of three rooms (there may have been a garret with a closet) of painted-plank construction, supported against the gable of the more pretentious dwelling." It is not certain that his abode was unchanged, but it was always the same sort of humble home, which, when not boarding, he usually occupied. In 1842, Virginia, who had remained a delicate and child-like wife, ruptured a blood-vessel, as has been already incidentally stated, and from that time her health was always the cause of great anxiety, aggravated by the poverty and misfortunes of their life. The reminiscences of her given by A. B. Harris are most vivid: —

"She hardly looked more than fourteen, fair, soft,

and graceful and girlish. Every one who saw her was won by her. Poe was very proud and very fond of her, and used to delight in the round, child-like face and plump little figure, which he contrasted with himself, so thin and half-melancholy looking, and she in turn idolized him. She had a voice of wonderful sweetness, and was an exquisite singer, and in some of their more prosperous days, when they were living in a pretty little rose-covered cottage on the outskirts of Philadelphia, she had her harp and piano. . . . She could not bear the slightest exposure, and needed the utmost care; and all those conveniences as to apartment and surroundings which are so important in the case of an invalid were almost matters of life and death to her. And yet the room where she lay for weeks, hardly able to breathe, except as she was fanned, was a little place with the ceiling so low over the narrow bed that her head almost touched it. But no one dared to speak, Mr. Poe was so sensitive and irritable; 'quick as steel and flint,' said one who knew him in those days. And he would not allow a word about the danger of her dying; the mention of it drove him wild."

Griswold describes the home from his own observation: —

"When once he sent for me to visit him, during a period of illness caused by protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife, I was impressed by the singular neatness and the air of refinement in his home. It was in a small house, in one of the pleasant and silent neighborhoods far from the centre of the town, and though slightly and cheaply furnished everything in it was so tasteful and so fitly disposed that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius.

For this and for most of the comforts he enjoyed, in his brightest as in his darkest years, he was chiefly indebted to his mother-in-law, who loved him with more than maternal devotion and constancy."

Mayne Reid completes the picture with a characterization of Mrs. Clemm: —

"She was the ever-vigilant guardian of the home, watching it against the silent but continuous sap of necessity, that appeared every day to be approaching closer and nearer. She was the sole servant, keeping everything clean; the sole messenger, doing the errands, making pilgrimages between the poet and his publishers, frequently bringing back such chilling responses as 'The article not accepted,' or 'The check not to be given until such and such a day,' — often too late for his necessities. And she was also the messenger to the market; from it bringing back not 'the delicacies of the season,' but only such commodities as were called for by the dire exigencies of hunger."

It was evidently a house of poverty, and in it Poe was cared for with complete devotion. His material circumstances, which brightened from time to time, continually gave way to periods of want, small borrowings, and even destitution; more than once the family had been relieved by the charity of friends; and now there was less and less hope of change, — it was plain that Poe had come to the end in this city. He had run himself out.

The decision to remove to New York was taken in the spring of 1844. Poe went on, with his wife, and sent back a letter to Mrs. Clemm on April 7, which discloses with painful distinctness the customary straits of the household: —

"My dear Muddie, — We have just this minute done breakfast, and I now sit down to write you about everything. I can't pay for the letter, because the post-office won't be open to-day. In the first place we arrived safe at Walnut Street wharf. The driver wanted to make me pay a dollar, but I would n't. Then I had to pay a boy a levy to put the trunk in the baggage-car. In the mean time I took Sis [Virginia] in the Depôt Hotel. It was only a quarter past six and we had to wait till seven. We saw the 'Ledger' and 'Times' — nothing in either — a few words of no account in the 'Chronicle.' We started in good spirits, but did not get here until nearly three o'clock. We went in the cars to Amboy, about forty miles from New York, and then took the steamboat the rest of the way. Sissy coughed none at all. When we got to the wharf it was raining hard. I left her on board the boat, after putting the trunks in the ladies' cabin, and set off to buy an umbrella and look for a boarding-house. I met a man selling umbrellas, and bought one for twenty-five cents. Then I went up Greenwich Street, and soon found a boarding-house. It is just before you get to Cedar Street, on the west side going up — the left-hand side. It has brown stone steps, with a porch with brown pillars. 'Morrison' is the name on the door. I made a bargain in a few minutes and then got a hack and went for Sis. I was not gone more than half an hour, and she was quite astonished to see me back so soon. She did n't expect me for an hour. There were two other ladies waiting on board — so she was n't very lonely. When we got to the house we had to wait about half an hour before the room was ready. The house is old and looks buggy. [The

letter is cut here for the signature on the other side.] The cheapest board I ever knew, taking into consideration the central situation and the *living*. I wish Kate [Catterina, the cat] could see it — she would faint. Last night, for supper, we had the nicest tea you ever drank, strong and hot — wheat bread and rye bread — cheese — tea-cakes (elegant), a great dish (two dishes) of elegant ham, and two of cold veal, piled up like a mountain and large slices — three dishes of the cakes and everything in the greatest profusion. No fear of starving here. The landlady seemed as if she could n't press us enough, and we were at home directly. Her husband is living with her — a fat, good-natured old soul. There are eight or ten boarders — two or three of them ladies — two servants. For breakfast we had excellent-flavored coffee, hot and strong — not very clear and no great deal of cream — veal cutlets, elegant ham and eggs and nice bread and butter. I never sat down to a more plentiful or a nicer breakfast. I wish you could have seen the eggs — and the great dishes of meat. I ate the first hearty breakfast I have eaten since I left our little home. Sis is delighted, and we are both in excellent spirits. She has coughed hardly any and had no night sweat. She is now busy mending my pants which I tore against a nail. I went out last night and bought a skein of silk, a skein of thread, two buttons, a pair of slippers, and a tin pan for the stove. The fire kept in all night. We have now got four dollars and a half left. To-morrow I am going to try and borrow three dollars, so that I may have a fortnight to go upon. I feel in excellent spirits, and have n't drank a drop — so that I hope soon to get out of trouble. The very

instant I scrape together enough money I will send it on. You can't imagine how much we both do miss you. Sissy had a hearty cry last night, because you and Catterina were n't here. We are resolved to get two rooms the first moment we can. In the mean time it is impossible we could be more comfortable or more at home than we are. It looks as if it were going to clear up now. Be sure and go to the post-office and have my letters forwarded. As soon as I write Lowell's article, I will send it to you, and get you to get the money from Graham. Give our best love to C——."

Poe first signalized his presence in the city by publishing the "Balloon Hoax" in the "Sun" on April 13. He applied to Dr. Anthon, who had previously befriended him, to use his influence with the Harpers to induce them to publish his collected tales, which he had revised and prepared for the press, and at the same time he gave new expression to his great ambition to found a magazine of his own; he said that he regarded the publication of his tales as incidental to this other ultimate purpose and a means of assisting its realization. The nature of his ambition and its grounds, which was always a common subject in his correspondence, is here best expressed, and the passage serves in lieu of all his prospectuses, of which the number was many.

"Before quitting the 'Messenger' I saw, or fancied I saw, through a long and dim vista, the brilliant field for ambition which a magazine of bold and noble aims presented to him who should successfully establish it in America. I perceived that the country, from its very constitution, could not fail of affording in a few years a larger proportionate amount of readers than any upon the earth. I perceived that

the whole energetic, busy spirit of the age tended wholly to magazine literature — to the curt, the terse, the well-timed, and the readily diffused, in preference to the old forms of the verbose and ponderous and the inaccessible. I knew from personal experience that lying *perdu* among the innumerable plantations in our vast Southern and Western countries were a host of well-educated men peculiarly devoid of prejudice, who would gladly lend their influence to a really vigorous journal, provided the right means were taken of bringing it fairly within the very limited scope of their observation.

"Now, I knew, it is true, that some scores of journals had failed (for, indeed, I looked upon the best success of the best of them as failure), but then I easily traced the causes of their failure in the impotency of their conductors, who made no scruple of basing their rules of action altogether upon what had been customarily done instead of what was now before them to do, in the greatly changed and constantly changing condition of things.

"In short, I could see no real reason why a magazine, if worthy the name, could not be made to circulate among twenty thousand subscribers, embracing the best intellect and education of the land. This was a thought which stimulated my fancy and my ambition. The influence of such a journal would be vast indeed, and I dreamed of honestly employing that influence in the sacred cause of the beautiful, the just, and the true.

"Even in a pecuniary view, the object was a magnificent one. The journal I proposed would be a large octavo of one hundred and twenty-eight pages, printed with bold type, single column, on the finest paper; and

disdaining everything of what is termed 'embellishment' with the exception of an occasional portrait of a literary man, or some well-engraved wood-design in obvious illustration of the text. Of such a journal I had cautiously estimated the expenses. Could I circulate twenty thousand copies at five dollars, the cost would be about thirty thousand dollars, estimating all contingencies at the highest rate. There would be a balance of seventy thousand dollars per annum.

"But not to trust too implicitly to *a priori* reasonings, and at the same time to make myself thoroughly master of all details which might avail me concerning the mere business of publication, I entered a few steps into the field of experiment. I joined the 'Messenger,' as you know, which was then in its second year with seven hundred subscribers, and the general outcry was that because a magazine had never succeeded south of the Potomac, therefore a magazine never could succeed. Yet, in spite of this, and in despite of the wretched taste of its proprietor, which hampered and controlled me at all points, I increased the circulation in fifteen months to five thousand five hundred subscribers paying an annual profit of ten thousand dollars when I left it. This number was never exceeded by the journal, which rapidly went down, and may now be said to be extinct. Of 'Graham's Magazine' you have no doubt heard. It had been in existence under the name of the 'Casket' for eight years when I became its editor, with a subscription list of about five thousand. In about eighteen months afterward, its circulation amounted to no less than fifty thousand — astonishing as this may appear. At this period I left it. It is now two years since, and the number of subscribers is now *not more* than

twenty-five thousand — but possibly very much less. In three years it will be extinct. The nature of this journal, however, was such that even its fifty thousand subscribers could not make it very profitable to its proprietor. Its price was three dollars, but not only were its expenses immense owing to the employment of absurd steel plates and other extravagances, which tell not at all, but recourse was had to innumerable agents, who received it at a discount of no less than fifty per cent, and whose frequent dishonesty occasioned enormous loss. But if fifty thousand *can* be obtained for a three-dollar magazine among a class of readers who really read little, why may not fifty thousand be procured for a five-dollar journal among the true and permanent readers of the land?

"Holding steadily in view my ultimate purpose, — to found a magazine of my own, or in which at least I might have a proprietary right, — it has been my constant endeavor in the mean time, not so much to establish a reputation great in itself as one of that particular character which should best further my special objects, and draw attention to my exertions as editor of a magazine. Thus I have written no books, and have been so far essentially a magazinist [illegible] bearing, not only willingly but cheerfully, sad poverty and the thousand consequent contumelies and other ills which the condition of the mere magazinist entails upon him in America, where, more than in any other region upon the face of the globe, to be poor is to be despised.

"The one great difficulty resulting from this course is, unless the journalist collects his various articles he is liable to be grossly misconceived and misjudged by men of whose good opinion he would be proud, but

who see, perhaps, only a paper here and there, by accident — often only one of his mere extravaganzas, written to supply a particular demand. He loses, too, whatever merit may be his due on the score of *versatility* — a point which can only be estimated by collection of his various articles in volume form and all together. This is indeed a serious difficulty — to seek a remedy for which is my object in writing you this letter.

" Setting aside, for the present, my criticisms, poems, and miscellanies (sufficiently numerous), my tales, a great number of which might be termed fantasy pieces, are in number sixty-six. They would make, perhaps, five of the ordinary novel-volumes. I have them prepared in every respect for the press; but, alas, I have no money, nor that influence which would enable me to get a publisher — although I seek *no* pecuniary remuneration. My sole immediate object is the furtherance of my ultimate one. I believe that if I could get my tales fairly before the public, and thus have an opportunity of eliciting foreign as well as native opinion respecting them, I should by their means be in a far more advantageous position than at present in regard to the establishment of a magazine. In a word, I believe that the publication of the work would lead forthwith either directly through my own exertion, or indirectly with the aid of a publisher, to the establishment of the journal I hold in view.

" It is very true that I have no claims upon your attention, not even that of personal acquaintance. But I have reached a crisis of my life in which I sadly stand in need of aid, and without being able to say why, — unless it is that I so earnestly desire your friendship, — I have always felt a half-hope that, if I

appealed to you, you would prove my friend. I know that you have unbounded influence with the Harpers, and I know that if you would exert it in my behalf you could procure me the publication I desire."

Dr. Anthon used his good offices, but without effect, owing to some "complaints" which the Harpers had against Poe in their previous experience of him.

Meanwhile, Lowell having undertaken to write Poe's biography for "Graham's," the correspondence which grew out of this continued the friendly relations which had begun with the issue of the short-lived "Pioneer." Poe now proposed to Lowell a coöperative author's association to float his projected magazine, but the scheme was too wild for consideration. In another letter, July 2, 1844, he described his temperament:

"I am excessively slothful and wonderfully industrious — by fits. There are epochs when any kind of mental exercise is torture, and when nothing yields me pleasure but solitary communion with the 'mountains and the woods,' — the 'altars' of Byron. I have thus rambled and dreamed away whole months, and awake, at last, to a sort of mania for composition. Then I scribble all day, and read all night, so long as the disease endures. . . .

"I am *not* ambitious — unless negatively. I now and then feel stirred up to excel a fool, merely because I hate to let a fool imagine that he may excel me. Beyond this I feel nothing of ambition. I really perceive that vanity about which most men merely prate, — the vanity of the human or temporal life. I live continually in a revery of the future. I have no faith in human perfectibility. I think that human exertion will have no appreciable effect upon humanity. . . .

"You speak of 'an estimate of my life,' — and, from

what I have already said, you will see that I have none to give. I have been too deeply conscious of the mutability and evanescence of temporal things to give any continuous effort to anything — to be consistent in anything. My life has been *whim* — impulse — passion — a longing for solitude — a scorn of all things present in an earnest desire for the future.

"I am profoundly excited by music, and by some poems, — those of Tennyson especially, — whom, with Keats, Shelley, Coleridge (occasionally), and a few others of like thought and expression, I regard as the *sole* poets."

Poe was now poor, but well, and had recovered resolution enough to maintain him, in his new surroundings, against his principal weakness. "Thank God!" he wrote to Thomas, on Sept. 8, 1844, "Richard (whom you know) is himself again. Tell Dow so; but he won't believe it. I am working at a variety of things (all of which you shall behold in the end) — and with an ardor of which I did not believe myself capable." Among the new plans were a "Critical History of American Literature," and, doubtless, his studies in mesmerism and materialistic metaphysics, which were the ground of some later tales, as well as of "Eureka."

In the fall Mrs. Clemm made an application on his behalf to N. P. Willis, then editor of the "Mirror," and he was given a place as assistant in the office. Early in October, his hand can be easily traced in the critical department. He contributed also to "Godey's," the "Democratic Review," and his old magazine, the "Southern Literary Messenger;" and he appears to have at least begun some newspaper correspondence. On Jan. 29, 1845, the "Mirror" published, by anticipation, from the February "American

Review," and with a commendatory notice by Willis, "The Raven." The poem is said to have been offered in Philadelphia a year before, and to have been then rejected by Graham, Godey, and McMichael, in conclave, who could only send fifteen dollars in charity to the starving poet, instead of publishing these famous verses. The poem was at once reprinted far and wide, and made Poe the literary hero of the hour. The same month Lowell's sketch of him appeared in "Graham's." It would seem that Poe again had a clear prospect of success; and, as his tales now became known in Paris and London, and the recognition of foreigners was added to the praise which from the first he had received in his own land, contemporary fame was secure. In the course of the year a selection of his tales, edited by Duyckinck, was published by Wiley and Putnam, and soon after his collected poems by the same firm; and the notices of these books were as favorable as an author could desire.

He had, however, still to lead his own life from day to day. He lectured in New York, on February 28, upon American Poetry, very acceptably, for he had elocutionary skill and an interesting personality to enlist the curiosity and sympathy of his audience. Willis sketches him, on this occasion, characteristically:

"He becomes a desk, — his beautiful head showing like a statuary embodiment of Discrimination; his accent drops like a knife through water, and his style is so much purer and clearer than the pulpit commonly gets or requires that the effect of what he says, besides other things, pampers the ear."

He was now contributing to the "Broadway Journal," — a weekly just launched by Charles F. Briggs, to whom he was introduced by a letter from Lowell;

and in March, 1845, he became a co-editor with a third of the profits for his salary. He had left the "Mirror," and what was known as the "Longfellow War" — an attack on Longfellow for alleged plagiarism — was carried over from its columns to those of the new "Journal," which he utilized also to reprint a considerable portion of his tales and poems. His name was now in all the magazines, probably because they took the opportunity of his sudden notoriety to empty their pigeon-holes of what articles by him they had on hand, and, besides, were willing to take what more he could provide from his own.

Briggs had been favorably impressed by Poe, and wrote to Lowell warning him not to believe too implicitly what was reported of Poe by enemies, of whom there were possibly many, besides Griswold, who was named. Briggs, however, changed his views. At the end of the half-year, there was trouble between him and his publisher, Mr. Bisco, of whom he meant to buy the "Journal," and at the same time leave Poe out. "I shall haul down Poe's name," he wrote; "he has latterly got into his old habits, and I fear will injure himself irretrievably." Briggs failed in this negotiation. "Poe," he says, "got into a drunken spree and conceived an idea that I had not treated him well, for which he had no other grounds than my having loaned him money, and persuaded Bisco to carry on the 'Journal' himself." It appears that after a period of sobriety, lasting from the time of his coming to New York to the publication of the "Raven" and his leaving the "Mirror," Poe had, in fact, again fallen into his former ways; and his actions when intoxicated were of such a character that they could not escape notoriety. He now spoke of Briggs in the contemptu-

ous way which he was accustomed to use toward those with whom, after a period of friendliness, he had broken; and Briggs, on his part, drew his colleague's character in unsparing lines. Poe's conversation is clearly reflected in the following, addressed to Lowell:

"You have formed a correct estimate of Poe's characterless character. I have never met a person so utterly deficient of high motive. He cannot conceive of anybody's doing anything, except for his own personal advantage; and he says, with perfect sincerity, and entire unconsciousness of the exposition which it makes of his own mind and heart, that he looks upon all reformers as madmen; and it is for this reason that he is so great an egoist. He cannot conceive why the world should not feel an interest in whatever interests him, because he feels no interest himself in what does not personally concern him. Therefore, he attributes all the favor which Longfellow, yourself, or anybody else receives from the world as an evidence of the ignorance of the world, and the lack of that favor in himself he attributes to the world's malignity. It is too absurd for belief, but he really thinks that Longfellow owes his fame mainly to the ideas which he has borrowed from his (Poe's) writings in the 'Southern Literary Messenger.' His presumption is beyond the liveliest imagination. He has no reverence for Homer, Shakespeare, or Milton, but thinks that 'Orion' is the greatest poem in the language. He has too much prudence to put his opinions into print, — or, rather, he can find nobody impudent enough to print them, — but he shows himself in his private converse. The Bible, he says, is all rigmarole."

Poe's failure, however, was, as before, a progressive one. He had been very industrious in the preceding

winter, and he kept up his labors, apparently, well into the summer. But with all this, he made no money. If Briggs found himself a creditor without hope of repayment, it was what all of Poe's associates had experienced. A letter to Thomas shows the continued poverty of the family, and illustrates incidentally the minor point. It is dated May 4, 1845: —

"The fact is, that being seized of late with a fit of industry, I put so many irons in the fire all at once that I have been quite unable to get them out. For the last three or four months I have been working fourteen or fifteen hours a day, — hard at it all the time, — and so, whenever I took pen in hand to write, I found that I was neglecting something that *would be* attended to. I never knew what it was to be a slave before.

"And yet, Thomas, I have made no money. I am as poor now as ever I was in my life — except in hope, which is by no means bankable. I have taken a third pecuniary interest in the 'Broadway Journal,' and for everything I have written for it have been, of course, so much out of pocket. In the end, however, it will pay me well — at least the prospects are good. Say to Dow for me that there never has been a chance for my repaying him, without putting myself to greater inconvenience than he himself would have wished to subject me to, had he known the state of the case. Nor am I able to pay him now. The Devil himself was never so poor. Say to Dow, also, that I am sorry he has taken to dunning in his old age — it is a diabolical practice, altogether unworthy 'a gentleman and a scholar' — to say nothing of the editor of the 'Madisonian.' I wonder how he would like me to write him a series of letters, — say

one a week, — giving him the literary gossip of New York, or something of more general character. I would furnish him such a series for whatever he could afford to give me. If he agrees to this arrangement, ask him to state the length and character of the letters — how often — and how much he can give me. Remember me kindly to him, and tell him I believe that dunning is his one sin — although at the same time, I do think it is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost spoken of in the Scriptures."

The "Broadway Journal" remained in Poe's hands as sole editor, until October. He then bought the paper of Bisco for a note of fifty dollars, indorsed by Horace Greeley, which, on becoming due, was paid by the indorser. He also endeavored to raise loans of the same amount from Griswold, with whom he was reconciled, his cousin, George Poe, and his old friend Kennedy, and must have exhausted all his resources for borrowing in the effort to retain control and keep the "Journal" in existence. Meanwhile, in October, he went to Boston and read a poem before the Lyceum, following Caleb Cushing, who made an address. It was his youthful production, "Al Aaraaf." The incident occasioned much unfavorable comment, and Poe declared in his "Journal" that he did not think it necessary to give an original poem for the price paid, and had meant to play a trick on "an audience of transcendentalists;" and he added, "Over a bottle of champagne that night, we confessed to Messrs. Cushing, Whipple, Hudson, Field, and a few other natives who swear not altogether by the frog-pond — we confessed, we say, the soft impeachment of the hoax." The fact was that he had nothing else to read. In New York he continued to fill the columns of the "Journal"

with his old productions; and, the end of the year approaching and the financial resources being altogether exhausted, the paper died, the last number being published Jan. 3, 1846; but Poe's valedictory was contained in the previous issue. Poe's literary work for the next year consisted of a few papers in "Graham's," and of critical contributions to "Godey's," which began in November, 1845, and finally took the shape of "The Literati," under which title they continued from May to November, 1846.

These critical articles upon his contemporaries in the same city did him no service, and were ill-advised. They were weak on both sides, both in friendship and in enmity. The censorious spirit had grown upon him, and his reluctance to admit excellences in any but the mediocre, with a few exceptions, was marked. The papers showed an unamiable character, and fell in only too readily with his depreciation of Longfellow and others, to make for him a reputation for ill-nature. In fact, personal feeling entered into his critical writing, in the later time, to a degree that makes it a part of the autobiography of the man. The inexpediency of these articles, however, was pointed out to him, and other advice given, by Simms, in a letter, July 30, 1846, which again illustrates the attitude of the literary men of his country toward him: —

"I note with regret the very desponding character of your last letter. I surely need not tell you how deeply and sincerely I deplore the misfortunes which attend you — the more so as I see no process for your relief and extrication, but such as must result from your own decision and resolve. No friend can well help you in the struggle which is before you. Money, no doubt, can be procured; but this is not altogether what you

require. Sympathy may soothe the hurts of self-esteem, and make a man temporarily forgetful of his assailants; but in what degree will this avail, and for how long, in the protracted warfare of twenty or thirty years? You are still a very young man, and one too largely and too variously endowed not to entertain the conviction as your friends entertain it — of a long and manful struggle with, and a final victory over, fortune. But this warfare the world requires you to carry on with your own unassisted powers. It is only in your manly resolution to use these powers, after a legitimate fashion, that it will countenance your claims to its regards and sympathy; and I need n't tell you how rigid and exacting it has ever been in the case of the poetical genius, or indeed, the genius of any order. Suffer me to tell you frankly, taking the privileges of a true friend, that you are now perhaps in the most perilous period of your career— just in that position — just at that time of life — when a false step becomes a capital error — when a single leading mistake is fatal in its consequences. You are no longer a boy. 'At thirty wise or never.' You must subdue your impulses; and, in particular, let me exhort you to discard all associations with men, whatever their talents, whom you cannot esteem as men. Pardon me for presuming thus to counsel one whose great natural and acquired resources should make him rather the teacher of others. But I obey a law of my own nature, and it is because of my sympathies that I speak. Do not suppose yourself abandoned by the worthy and honorable among your friends. They will be glad to give you welcome *if you will suffer them*. They will rejoice — I know their feelings and hear their language — to countenance

your return to that community — that moral province in society — of which, let me say to you respectfully and regretfully, you have been, according to all reports, but too heedlessly, and perhaps too scornfully, indifferent. Remain in obscurity for a while. You have a young wife, — I am told a suffering and an interesting one, — let me entreat you to cherish her, and to cast away those pleasures which are not worthy of your mind, and to trample those temptations under foot which degrade your person, and make it familiar to the mouth of vulgar jest. You may [do] all this by a little circumspection. It is still within your power. Your resources from literature are probably much greater than mine. I am sure they are quite as great. You can increase them so that they shall be ample for all your legitimate desires; but you must learn the worldling's lesson of prudence — a lesson, let me add, which the literary world has but too frequently and unwisely disparaged. It may seem to you very impertinent — in most cases it is impertinent — that he who gives nothing else should presume to give counsel. But one gives that which he can most spare, and you must not esteem me indifferent to a condition which I can in no other way assist. I have never been regardless of your genius, even when I knew nothing of your person. It is some years since I counselled Mr. Godey to obtain the contributions of your pen. He will tell you this. I hear that you reproach him. But how can you expect a magazine proprietor to encourage contributions which embroil him with all his neighbors. These broils do you no good — vex your temper, destroy your peace of mind, and hurt your reputation. You have abundant resources upon which to draw, even were there no Grub

Street in Gotham. Change your tactics, and begin a new series of papers with your publisher. The printed matter which I send you might be quoted by Godey, and might be ascribed to me. But, surely, I need not say to you that, to a Southern man, the annoyance of being mixed up in a squabble with persons whom he does not know, and does not care to know, — and from whom no Alexandrine process of cutting loose would be permitted by society, — would be an intolerable grievance. I submit to frequent injuries and misrepresentations, content — though annoyed by the [illegible] that the viper should amuse himself upon the file, at the expense of his own teeth. As a man, as a writer, I shall always be solicitous of your reputation and success. You have but to resolve on taking and asserting your position, equally in the social and the literary world, and your way is clear, your path is easy, and you will find true friends enough to sympathize in your triumphs."

"The Literati" continued to appear until November, and Poe did no other work. He was still thinking of the "Stylus;" and he had persuaded Philip Pendleton Cooke, who had continued one of the most appreciative of his readers, to undertake a new life of him of the sort that Lowell had done three years before, but perhaps on a different scale. It does not appear that anything resulted from the plan.

A new phase of Poe's biography emerges in the period of which the other incidents have now been detailed, — his relations with the literary women of the New York coterie. He attended, occasionally with his wife, the receptions of Dr. Dewey, James Lawson, and Mrs. Botta, then Miss Lynch, and was a noticeable, though usually silent figure. He formed intimate

relations, in particular, with Mrs. Osgood, — a poetess of the time, to whom he had requested an introduction from Willis, making a desire to hear her judgment of "The Raven" an excuse. He had already warmly praised her verses in his writings and lectures. She described the first interview herself: —

"I shall never forget the morning when I was summoned to the drawing-room by Mr. Willis to receive him. With his proud and beautiful head erect, his dark eyes flashing with the electric light of feeling and of thought, a peculiar, an inimitable blending of sweetness and hauteur in his expression and manner, he greeted me, calmly, gravely, almost coldly, yet with so marked an earnestness that I could not help being deeply impressed by it. From that moment until his death we were friends; although we met only during the first year of our acquaintance."

They exchanged verses, Poe having recourse to some earlier lines addressed to a much younger favorite of ten years before; and Mrs. Osgood soon became intimate at 85 Amity Street, where the Poes then lived. She gives the picture of this home: —

"It was in his own simple yet poetical home that to me the character of Edgar Poe appeared in its most beautiful light. Playful, affectionate, witty, alternately docile and wayward as a petted child, for his young, gentle, and idolized wife, and for all who came, he had, even in the midst of his most harassing literary duties, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention. At his desk beneath the romantic picture of his loved and lost Lenore, he would sit, hour after hour, patient, assiduous, and uncomplaining, tracing, in an exquisitely clear chirography and with almost superhuman swiftness, the lightning thoughts — the

'rare and radiant fancies'—as they flashed through his wonderful and ever-wakeful brain. I recollect, one morning, toward the close of his residence in this city, when he seemed unusually gay and light-hearted. Virginia, his sweet wife, had written me a pressing invitation to come to them; and I, who never could resist her affectionate summons, and who enjoyed his society far more in his own home than elsewhere, hastened to Amity Street. I found him just completing his series of papers entitled 'The Literati of New York.' 'See,' said he, displaying in laughing triumph several little rolls of narrow paper (he always wrote thus for the press), 'I am going to show you by the difference of length in these the different degrees of estimation in which I hold all you literary people. In each of these one of you is rolled up and fully discussed. Come, Virginia, help me!' And one by one they unfolded them. At last they came to one which seemed interminable. Virginia laughingly ran to one corner of the room with one end, and her husband to the opposite with the other. 'And whose lengthened sweetness long drawn out is that?' said I. 'Hear her!' he cried. 'Just as if her little vain heart did n't tell her it 's herself!'"

This friendship continued, she says, with "many little poetical episodes in which the impassioned romance of his temperament impelled him to indulge," but much to the pleasure of Mrs. Poe, who thought Mrs. Osgood's influence over him good, and he did promise her not to use stimulants. At Virginia's request, a correspondence between Poe and Mrs. Osgood sprang up; and, unfortunately, one letter having been seen by Mrs. Ellet, also a poetess, it was decided that all ought to be demanded back by Mrs. Osgood. She sent

a delegation headed by Margaret Fuller to recover them, and they were at once surrendered by Poe, who used some language in regard to Mrs. Ellet which involved him in gossip and scandal and trouble. The incident was one of the most unpleasant, and is more fully unfolded in unpublished letters of the women concerned. Mrs. Osgood did not see him after this episode. She complained bitterly to Griswold of the affair, and said that after her first introduction she had gone "to Albany and Providence to avoid him;" and she continues, "he followed me to each of those places and wrote to me, imploring me to love him, many a letter which I did not reply to, until his *wife* added her entreaties to his, and said that I might save him from infamy and her from death by showing an affectionate interest in him." Such is her account of the course of this friendship, which has been told more in detail by her brother-in-law; but, notwithstanding, she wrote on her death-bed defending Poe's memory:

"I have never *seen* him otherwise than gentle, generous, well bred, and fastidiously refined. To a sensitive and delicately nurtured woman, there was a peculiar and irresistible charm in the chivalric, graceful, and almost tender reverence with which he invariably approached all women who won his respect. It was this which first commanded and always retained my regard for him."

The next unfortunate episode of this time arose from the publication of "The Literati" in "Godey's." The paper devoted to Thomas Dunn English was savage in the extreme; and the victim replied by publishing in the "Mirror" of June 23, 1846, which had passed out of the hands of Willis, an attack of equal virulence on Poe, but it touched his life, not his books. Poe was

furious, and responded in a "Reply" which Godey declined for the magazine, but got published in the Philadelphia "Spirit of the Times," July 10, thereby bringing on himself a bad-tempered letter from the author. Poe brought a suit for libel, and won it, being adjudged damages in the sum of two hundred and twenty-five dollars, with costs to the defendant, Feb. 17, 1847. No witnesses appeared to justify the charges.

Before this affair was brought to its conclusion, the bitterest period of Poe's life had begun. In the spring of 1846, he had moved out to Fordham, a little village in the environs of the city, and rented there a small cottage. The house was pleasantly situated, with cherry-trees about it, but was of the humblest description, and contained in all but three small rooms and a kind of closet. It was furnished with only the necessary articles, and a few keepsakes, among them presentation copies of the works of Mrs. Browning, to whom Poe had dedicated his poems, and from whom he had received the kindest acknowledgments. Here, early in 1846, he fell ill, and from this time his health was fairly broken. His habits were the cause of this overthrow of an originally strong constitution. His wife, too, who was even now but twenty-five years old, was plainly doomed to an early death. As the year grew old, affairs became worse, and finally in the winter it came to destitution. Mrs. Gove, hearing of this, visited the family, and found the dying wife with only sheets and a coverlet on the bed, and wrapped in her husband's coat. She applied to Mrs. Maria Louise Shew, who immediately relieved the necessities of the family, and raised a subscription of sixty dollars. Poe roused his faculties, and accomplished some little work, and the magazines again printed his name.

In December, a public appeal was made in the "Express": —

"We regret to learn that Edgar A. Poe and his wife are both dangerously ill with the consumption, and that the hand of misfortune lies heavy upon their temporal affairs. We are sorry to mention the fact that they are so far reduced as to be barely able to obtain the necessaries of life. This is indeed a hard lot, and we hope that the friends and admirers of Mr. Poe will come promptly to his assistance in his bitterest hour of need."

Willis also made an appeal in his own paper, the "Home Journal," and he added to it his impression of both Poe's good and evil genius: —

"Mr. Poe lives out of the city, and we cannot ascertain before this goes to press how far this report of his extreme necessity is true. We received yesterday a letter from an *anonymous hand*, mentioning the paragraph in question, expressing high admiration for Poe's genius, and enclosing a sum of money with a request that we would forward it to him. We think it very possible that this and other aid may be timely and welcome, though we know that on Mr. Poe's recovery from former illnesses, he has been deeply mortified and distressed by the discovery that his friends had been called upon for assistance. . . . In connection with this public mention of Mr. Poe's personal matters, perhaps it will not be thought inopportune, if we put on its proper footing a public impression which does him injustice. We have not seen nor corresponded with Mr. Poe for two years, and we hazard this delicate service without his leave, of course, and simply because we have seen him suffer from the lack of such vindication, when his name has been

brought injuriously before the public, and have then wished for some such occasion to speak for him. We refer to conduct and language charged against him, which, were he at the time in sane mind, were an undeniable forfeiture of character and good feeling. To blame, in some degree, still, perhaps he is. But let charity for the failings of human nature judge of the degree. Mr. Poe was engaged with us in the editorship of a daily paper, we think, for about six months. A more considerate, quiet, talented, and gentlemanlike associate than he was for the whole of that time, we could not have wished. Not liking the unstudent-like necessity of coming every day into the city, however, he left us, by his own wish alone, and it was one day soon after that we first saw him in the state to which we refer. He came into our office with his usual gait and manner, and, with no symptom of ordinary intoxication, he talked like a man insane. Perfectly self-possessed in all other respects, his brain and tongue were evidently beyond his control. We learned afterwards that the least stimulus — a single glass of wine — would produce this effect upon Mr. Poe, and that rarely as these instances of easy aberration of caution and mind occurred, he was liable to them, and while under their influence, voluble and personally self-possessed, but neither sane nor responsible. Now Mr. Poe very possibly may not be willing to consent to even this admission of any infirmity. He has little or no memory of them afterwards, we understand. But public opinion unqualifiedly holds him blamable for what he has said and done under such excitements; and while a call is made in a public paper for aid, it looks like doing him a timely service to, at least, partially exonerate him."

Willis sent this in a note to Poe, Dec. 21, 1846: —

"The enclosed speaks for itself — the letter, that is to say. Have I done right or wrong in the enclosed editorial? It was a kind of thing I could *only* do *without asking* you, and you *may express anger about it if you like in print.* It will have a good bearing, I think, on your law case. Please write me whether you are suffering or not, and, if so, let us do something systematically for you."

Poe in reply wrote an open letter to Willis, December 30: —

"My dear Willis, — The paragraph which has been put in circulation respecting my wife's illness, my own, my poverty, etc., is now lying before me; together with the beautiful lines by Mrs. Locke and those by Mrs. ——, to which the paragraph has given rise, as well as your kind and manly comments in the 'Home Journal.'

"The motive of the paragraph I leave to the conscience of him or her who wrote it or suggested it. Since the thing is done, however, and since the concerns of my family are thus pitilessly thrust before the public, I perceive no mode of escape from a public statement of what is true and what is erroneous in the report alluded to.

"That my wife is ill, then, is true; and you may imagine with what feelings I add that this illness, hopeless from the first, has been heightened and precipitated by the reception, at two different periods, of anonymous letters — one enclosing the paragraph now in question; the other, those published calumnies of Messrs. ——, for which I yet hope to find redress in a court of justice.

"Of the facts, that I myself have been long and

dangerously ill, and that my illness has been a well-understood thing among my brethren of the press, the best evidence is afforded by the innumerable paragraphs of personal and of literary abuse with which I have been latterly assailed. This matter, however, will remedy itself. At the very first blush of my new prosperity, the gentlemen who toadied me in the old will recollect themselves and toady me again. You, who know me, will comprehend that I speak of these things only as having served, in a measure, to lighten the gloom of unhappiness, by a gentle and not unpleasant sentiment of mingled pity, merriment, and contempt.

"That, as the inevitable consequence of so long an illness, I have been in want of money, it would be folly in me to deny — but that I have ever materially suffered from privation, beyond the extent of my capacity for suffering, is not altogether true. That I am 'without friends' is a gross calumny, which I am sure *you* never could have believed, and which a thousand noble-hearted men would have good right never to forgive me for permitting to pass unnoticed and undenied. Even in the city of New York I could have no difficulty in naming a hundred persons, to each of whom — when the hour for speaking had arrived — I could and would have applied for aid, and with unbounded confidence, and with absolutely *no* sense of humiliation.

"I do not think, my dear Willis, that there is any need of my saying more. I am getting better, and may add — if it be any comfort to my enemies — that I have little fear of getting worse. The truth is, I have a great deal to do; and I have made up my mind not to die till it is done."

Poe acknowledged later in a letter to Mrs. Locke, who sent him the verses referred to, that in composing this letter, "a natural pride impelled him to shrink from public charity even at the cost of truth in denying those necessities which were but too real." They were real, but they were relieved. The worst was to come. On January 29, he wrote to Mrs. Shew, imploring her to come and see his wife for the last time. On the next day, Virginia died.

Poe continued to be ill; and money was again raised by subscription in New York to provide for him. Mrs. Shew saw him frequently, and for somewhat more than a year charged herself with his welfare, attending to the health of both his mind and body. In March, he addressed some lines to her in the "Home Journal," and in December, "Ulalume" was published in the "American Review." In the intervening months, Poe appears to have done no literary work except "Eureka." He lived in great retirement, at the Fordham Cottage, with Mrs. Clemm, and spent much time in solitary rambling and brooding; but at the end of the year he returned to the world. The "Stylus," which he had never abandoned, was again put in train by means of a new prospectus; and, with a view to obtaining funds to start the magazine, he lectured in the rooms of the Society Library, Feb. 3, 1847, upon the "Cosmogony of the Universe." Willis assisted him by an advertisement, and he had an audience of about sixty persons, to whom he spoke for two hours and a half. The lecture consisted of an abstract of "Eureka," and was noticed by the press with favor. He at once published the book, through Putnam, who remembered the excitement of Poe in offering it, his intense earnestness in declaring

its importance, and his prophecy that an edition of fifty thousand copies would only be a beginning. In this earlier part of the year, he seems to have composed "The Bells." In June, Mrs. Shew decided to break off her acquaintance with him, finding that it was impracticable to maintain it on familiar terms; and in a characteristic letter he accepted the fact, while expressing gratitude and devotion to her.

In her place, three other women now entered into his life. Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, a poetess of Providence, forty-five years of age and a widow, had for some time been, like Mrs. Osgood, an object of his admiration, but he had never met her. Some lines, addressed to him and originally written by her for a valentine party in New York, had been published in March in the "Home Journal," and to these he replied by the lines "To Helen" published in November in the "Union Magazine." He had sent a copy of them, without his name, to her as early as June; and, on receiving no acknowledgment, he wrote a letter to a mutual acquaintance, a lady then in Providence, to obtain some information about her, and the correspondent gave the letter to Mrs. Whitman, who still made no sign. She was well aware that her praise was a marked topic of Poe's conversation in quarters where she would be likely to hear of this admiration. In July he lectured in Lowell, Massachusetts, and there met the second of the three women who were now influential in his life, a married lady, known in his poems and biography as "Annie." On returning to New York, he went to Richmond, in pursuit of his plan to obtain subscribers for the "Stylus," and raise money by lecturing. There he met the third woman, Mrs. Shelton, who, under her maiden name, Sarah

Elmira Royster, had been the object of his first youthful attentions, as has been related, and was now a widow. He was on the point of proposing marriage to her when he received from Mrs. Whitman two stanzas of a poem, "A Night in August," unsigned, and sent, she says, in "playful acknowledgment" of his own anonymous verses. He returned to New York, and then went to Providence, bearing a letter of introduction, and presented himself to Mrs. Whitman, passed two evenings with her, and asked her to marry him. She was deterred from accepting the offer by what she had heard of his character; and a correspondence now sprang up between them, consisting on his part of contrition for excesses which he could not deny, and of appeals to her in his hopelessness, while he also warned her against placing confidence in all that his enemies said of him. Late in October he again called on her, as he was passing through Providence on his way to Lowell, and urged his suit. He spent some days with his new friend, "Annie," at Westford, near Lowell, making rapid progress in his devotion to her, and, on receiving an indecisive reply from Mrs. Whitman, wrote, engaging to call upon the latter on November 4. Poe's account of subsequent events, as told in a letter to "Annie" November 16, is that he had no memory of what took place after leaving Lowell until he reached Providence; that he was in a state of despair and tormented by the "Demon" all the night, and that the next morning he procured two ounces of laudanum, went back to Boston, wrote a letter to her telling where to find him and imploring her to come and see him on his death-bed, as she had promised, took half the laudanum, lost his reason before he could post the letter, and was "saved" by a friend, who, as Poe appeared

sane after rejecting the laudanum, allowed him to return to Providence. He had left Lowell on November 2, and he appeared in Providence at Mrs. Whitman's on the morning of November 7, but she refused to see him on account of his having broken his engagement to call three days before, in consequence of his intoxication in Boston; but, after a while, she consented to receive him in the afternoon. He spent that and the following day in pleading, in answer to which she showed him one or more letters which she had received in regard to him, and he went away abruptly saying that they would meet, if at all, as strangers. He spent the night in intoxication, and returned in a delirious condition the next day, was received by her mother, who spent two hours with him while his "appeals rang through the house," and finally by herself, whom he "hailed as an angel sent to save him from perdition," and at last, growing more composed, was given in charge of Dr. Oakie and Mr. Pabodie, who cared for him until he recovered. She now consented to a conditional engagement; and, after giving her a pledge of abstinence, he departed for New York, and reached home November 14, in a state, says Mrs. Clemm, "hardly recognizable." Two days later, he wrote the letter to "Annie," describing his experience after leaving her house, and proposed to take a cottage for himself and Mrs. Clemm near her, at Westford, and meanwhile begged her to come on to Fordham and visit him. He had not, however, forgotten the "Stylus," and also wrote to a brother of the first Mrs. Allan in Richmond, asking a loan of two hundred dollars to assist him in this old project.

On December 20, Poe left Fordham to lecture in Providence. On the way to the station he called on

Mrs. Hewitt, another of the New York coterie of poetesses. She related the incident in a letter to Mrs. Whitman, Oct. 2, 1850: —

"As Mr. Poe arose to leave, he said, 'I am going to Providence this afternoon.' 'I hear you are about to be married,' I replied. He stood with the knob of the parlor door in his hand, and, as I said this, drew himself up, with a look of great reserve, and replied, 'That marriage will never take place!' 'But,' I persisted, 'it is said you are already published.' Still standing like a statue with a rigid face, he repeated, 'It will never take place.' These were his words, and this was all."

He lectured in Providence the same evening, and remained in the city, urging his suit. He was drinking at the bar of the hotel during his stay, and on the second day called on Mrs. Whitman in a state of partial intoxication, for which the next day he apologized. This was on Saturday. The ceremony was appointed for Monday. On the morning of that day, he again drank at the bar, and Mrs. Whitman, being informed of it, broke off the engagement. He called, with no sign of intoxication, and was received by her in silence. She put some papers, intrusted to her by him, into his hands, drenched her handkerchief with ether, and threw herself on a sofa, hoping for unconsciousness. He knelt beside her, begging but "one word." "What can I say?" "Say that you love me, Helen." "I love you." These were her last words to him, and he went away. Such is her own account. He wrote to "Annie," Jan. 11, 1849, that a great burden was taken off his heart, and that he had fully made up his mind to break the engagement; two weeks later he enclosed his last letter to

Mrs. Whitman in one to "Annie," and bade her read, and then seal it with wax, and post it from Boston.

He had, in the midst of these affairs, resumed his connection with the magazines; and "Godey's," the "Messenger," the "American Review," "Sartain's," and the "Flag of our Union," a Boston paper, received his contributions. He was again seriously ill in the spring of the year, and wrote despairing letters to "Annie," in whose sympathy he found most consolation. He visited her again in May, and on returning to New York, determined to go South, to lecture and obtain support for the "Stylus," concerning which he was now negotiating with Mr. Patterson of St. Louis. He was aware of the state of his health, and requested Griswold, with whom he had maintained friendly relations for some years, and whose capacity for the work in hand he knew, to collect his works, and he charged Willis with the duty of writing his biography. He also asked Mrs. Lewis, another poetess of New York, with whom he had a relation of the sort already sufficiently illustrated, to write his life. He had interested himself of late warmly in obtaining notice of her poems, and wrote to Griswold, June 28, that if the latter would introduce what he had himself written of her in the new edition of the "Female Poets of America," he would reciprocate the favor "when, where, and as you please." It is but just to add that Mrs. Lewis, at whose house he spent the next day, was not aware of these intentions. On June 30, he bade good-by to Mrs. Clemm, who went with him to the steamboat. He stopped at Philadelphia, where he had an attack of delirium, and on his recovery went to Richmond, where he spent the summer. He was well received by his friends, lectured

with great success, and was generally in good spirits. Twice he suffered his usual severe illness, and was warned by the attendant physician, Dr. Carter, that a third indulgence would probably prove fatal; and he received the remonstrance with tears and contrition, and renewed resolution.

The narrative of these last days has already been condensed by the present writer in a passage that may, perhaps, best be reprinted: —

"He stayed at the Madison Tavern, a once fashionable but then decayed hotel, and he visited much among his acquaintances, by whom he was well received, and, indeed, lionized. At Duncan's Lodge, especially, the residence of the Mackenzies, who had adopted his sister Rosalie, he was made at home; and at Robert Sully's, the artist whom he had befriended in his early schooldays, and at Mrs. Talley's, he passed many of those hours which he said were the happiest he had known for years. To Miss Susan Archer Talley, now Mrs. Weiss, who then looked on Poe with the romantic interest of a young poetess as well as with a woman's sympathy with sadness so confessed as his, is due the most life-like and detailed portrait of him that exists. Erect in stature, cold, impassive, almost haughty in manner, soberly and fastidiously clad in black, to a stranger's eye he wore a look of distinction rather than beauty; on nearer approach one was more struck by the strongly marked head, with the broad brow, the black curly hair brushed back, the pallid, careworn, and in repose the somewhat haggard features, while beneath the concealment of a short black mustache one saw the slight habitual contraction of the mouth and occasionally the quick, almost imperceptible curl of the

upper lip in scorn — a sneer, it is said, that was easily excited; but the physical fascination of the man was felt, at last, to lie in his eyes, large, jet-black, with a steel-gray iris, clear as crystal, restless, ever expanding and contracting as, responsive with intelligence and emotion, they bent their full, open, steady, unshrinking gaze from under the long black lashes that shaded them. On meeting his friends Poe's face would brighten with pleasure, his features lost the worn look and his reserve its coldness; to men he was cordial, to women he showed a deference that seems always to have suggested a reminiscence of chivalry; and in society with the young he forgot his melancholy, listened with amusement, or joined in their repartees with evident pleasure, though he would soon leave them for a seat in the portico, or a walk in the grounds with a single friend. To the eyes of his young girlish friend he seemed invariably cheerful, and often even playful in mood. Once only was he noticeably cast down; it was when visiting the old deserted Mayo place, called The Hermitage, where he used to go frequently in his youth, and the scene was so picturesque that it is worth giving at length: —

"'On reaching the place our party separated, and Poe and myself strolled slowly about the grounds. I observed that he was unusually silent and preoccupied, and, attributing it to the influence of memories associated with the place, forbore to interrupt him. He passed slowly by the mossy bench called the "lovers' seat," beneath two aged trees, and remarked, as we turned toward the garden, "There used to be white violets here." Searching amid the tangled wilderness of shrubs, we found a few late blossoms, some of which he placed carefully between the leaves of a note-

book. Entering the deserted house, he passed from room to room with a grave, abstracted look, and removed his hat, as if involuntarily, on entering the saloon, where in old times many a brilliant company had assembled. Seated in one of the deep windows, over which now grew masses of ivy, his memory must have borne him back to former scenes, for he repeated the familiar lines of Moore: —

> "I feel like one
> Who treads alone
> Some banquet hall deserted,"

and paused, with the first expression of real sadness that I had ever seen on his face. The light of the setting sun shone through the drooping ivy-boughs into the ghostly room; and the tattered and mildewed paper-hangings, with their faded tracery of rose-garlands, waved fitfully in the autumn breeze. An inexpressibly eerie feeling came over me, which I can even now recall, and as I stood there, my old childish idea of the poet as a spirit of mingled light and darkness recurred strongly to my imagination.'"

He spent much of his time with Mrs. Shelton, and finally asked her to marry him, and was, it must be believed from the correspondence, accepted. She was older than he, a plain woman, and wealthy. Poe got the wedding ring, and after his death she wore mourning for him. At the last moment, he still wavered when he thought of "Annie," who was evidently the nearest to him of all, except Mrs. Clemm,— but that was impossible. He was in doubt whether to have Mrs. Clemm come on to Richmond, or to go himself and bring her. He decided on the latter course, and on Sunday, as is conjectured, September 30,

or else on the following day, he left his friends in Richmond, and went on the boat sober and cheerful. After reaching Baltimore, it is said that he took the train to Philadelphia, but was brought back, being in the wrong car, from Havre de Grace in a state of stupor. It is also said that he dined with some old military friends, became intoxicated, and was captured by politicians, who kept him stupefied, and made him vote at several booths on Wednesday, election day. All that is known is that, being then partially intoxicated, he called upon his friend, Dr. Brooks, on an afternoon, and, not finding him, went away; and that on Wednesday, October 3, about noon, he was recognized at a rum shop used as a voting-place, — Ryan's Fourth Ward Polls,— and on his saying that he was acquainted with Dr. Snodgrass, word was sent to that gentleman, who had him taken to the Washington Hospital. He was admitted at five o'clock, and word was sent to his relatives, who attended to his needs. He remained, except for a brief interval, in delirium; and on Sunday, Oct. 7, 1849, at about five o'clock in the morning, he died. The funeral was taken charge of by his relatives, and took place the next day. Five persons, including the officiating minister, followed his body to the grave.

G. E. W.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TALES

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THE reader who chanced in youth to come upon one of Poe's finer stories is not likely to have forgotten its impression on his unjaded sense of mystery and beauty. Nor are there many who in mature years, and in this heyday of the short story, first become acquainted with the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," but must realize the power of their conjuring charm. Taken together they are the fullest exhibit of their author's genius, if not the highest; and if the highest is to be seen in his poetry, which fairly may be debated, the prose tales with their greater volume and diversity lose nothing in comparison.

Poe is often, and correctly enough, termed a romancer. Certainly he was a writer of ornate, yet vision-bred and illusive, legends of some dreamland of his own, and not a novelist observing our everyday world. His rarest tales have the quality of pure romance, and otherwise his inventive prose is concerned with incident and adventure rather than with the portrayal of human character. This of course, since he was a poet, and few of the breed are novelists. The personages of their fiction are servitors required for its mechanism, and seldom individualized within their respective types. Now and then a novel-

ist, — Thackeray, for instance, — has written delightful minor poetry, out of the music and humor and intellectuality of a rich nature. Those who have done more are exceptions, of the universal cast. Poets with the novelist's gift are for the most part dramatists, using the dramatic form at times when the spirit of the stage is not at odds with that of literature. As for the narrative-poets, it is only a Chaucer or a Browning whose men and women are much more than illuminated figures. Hugo is strong in poetry, fiction, and drama, but his prose stories for the most part were created of romance aforethought. Other French poets of the time have shown artistic deftness equally in lyrical verse and in prose, and to these Poe is more nearly related. His note is his own, yet the modelling of his work allies him still more closely to these writers, who also have been devoted, like him, to the *conte*, or short story, and exquisite in its production. It will be remembered that as a lyrist he thought the expression "a long poem" was a misnomer, and that a poem, like any other work of art, must be enjoyed as a whole and at one sitting. In prose, correlatively, and aware of his own forte, he limited his best efforts to the short tale. Hawthorne went no farther, in his tentative period; but Hawthorne, while he seemingly lacked the ear and impulse for lyrical expression, passed on to the creation of extended romances, — even to fictions which, though very ideal, partook somewhat of the cast of the true novel. His best short stories, such as "The Birthmark," "The Artist of the Beautiful," "Young Goodman Brown," "Rappaccini's Daughter," and the Province House series, all thoroughly romantic whether legendary or otherwise, rival those of Poe,

yet differ from them in the moral purpose of their allegory. There is no such purpose, overt or covert, in more than three or four of Poe's, but an artistic passion vibrates throughout their design.

Probably one must go back to the German romanticism for something of his method, but the distinction is plain that he was a romancer and not a romanticist. This could not be said if he had written nothing but the tales which are as ideal as those of Tieck, the colloquies more subtle than Herder's and with the Platonic flavor of Berkeley's "Alciphron," and a treatise like "Eureka," — of which a germ appears in a single phrase of Novalis. But his romance is of the mixed type. He entered the range of the long story, though no more as a romanticist than as a novelist; simply as a narrator of fanciful adventure, and with no literary purpose other than, like De Foe, to hold the reader by the verisimilitude of actual experience. This is as near as he came to naturalism, while in his longer and shorter pieces of this kind his imagination suddenly gives out, and he is unable to make a finish, or to dispose of his actors. He resorts to melodrama, and the climax is lurid, phantasmal, and ruinously out of keeping.

All this stamps him as a poet, sent back in a rather forlorn condition, after excursions in the visible world, to his own uncharted domain, and not able readily to find the entrance-gate. Whether at home or wandering, however, he always has one force in reserve, — a mental power which some might think abnormal in a singing poet and child of the imagination. Yet a ratiocinative gift befits the poet who is both seer and maker. To be an artist first and always requires a turn for induction and analysis. Poe was quite within

the liberties, constructing his tales of ratiocination and pseudo-science, although the poet may be concealed from one reading these alone. To avert such a mischance, the author of "The Purloined Letter" is at pains to show the reader that the poet and mathematician often are one, — that the poet-artist must be a mathematician with the analytic gift. This is in a sense as true as that the man of science is aided by imagination to rise from step to step of discovery.

The variety and amount of his poetry both increase if we accept the highly sublimated "Romances of Death" as poems in their way, just as we recognize in the design of other stories that everything is ordered by an artist bent on psychological effect. The opening group, indeed, if put forth by a modern writer, might be christened "Pastels," or "Impressions," or "Petits Poëmes en Prose." The inevitableness with which all the tales of real quality have crystallized themselves, in the present edition, into a few distinct groups, affords some ground for wonder that they now are permitted to do so for the first time. The two divisions in this volume notably accord with the fitness of things. They are composed of the prose-poems just mentioned, and of his scenic and dramatic romances. Each group as a whole seems a work in itself, symphonic through the co-relation of its parts. "Shadow," — that introvarious euphony, that ominous music of some immemorial Eld, neither of Greece nor of Chaldæa nor of Egypt, but intensely wrought from the boding and the magic of them all,— and "Silence," that demonic fable of the prehistoric Libyan waste, — these marvellous discourses well may form the prelude and epilogue of the opening series, itself subdivided into mundane and supramundane concep-

tions, fantasies of Death in Life and of Life after Death. The tone is unique, melodious, fateful, the chant of some mystic ritual, to the artifice of which the soul is quickly attuned. The successive numbers are each perfect in its way, and the way, however romantic, is like nothing else in our own literature. The complaint as to its monotone is a form of the demand that one man of talent shall be like the others, and proceed from short to extended masterpieces after the wonted process. Many people, like children, wish the game always to be played in the same way. Let us take an artist as he is, and for what he is. It was the felicity of Poe to give us the psychology, the drama, the awe and mystery, of "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia," and the strange melody and perfume and color of "Eleonora." His resources of imagination and construction are at their full in these bits of absolute art. "Usher" is developed with a method cognate to that of Browning's "Childe Roland," and proceeds as relentlessly, yet with beauteous episodes, to the sullen end. In "Ligeia," "Morella," "Berenice," and the rest, the characters are nothing: the high-born ecstatic dames and maidens move through stately halls, or linger in the gardens of mist-haunted vales; they are "such as one in pictures sees," and come from very far away. Poe would not have known what to do with less impalpable characters. He was so constituted that a portrait on the wall, the mere suggestion of a being that had been, incited his passion and fantasy more than the imagining of a being still in life, — that is, in the eerie life of his legend. He pursued, by choice, the very shadow of a shade. All, so far as it belongs to any time or place, is mediæval, and thus again in

the spirit of romance. It was Preraphaelite, in a sense, before the "brotherhood" achieved a name; for their cult, whatever its artistic crusade, was a cry out of the heart of feudalism, — that shattered progeny of Uther, lying as if in death, yet ever dreaming its dream.

With reference to Poe and the German romanticism, it is to be noted that friendly critics taxed him with "Germanism and gloom." To this he rejoined that "terror is not of Germany, but of the soul." He defied them to recognize in the Tales "that species of pseudo-horror which we are taught to call Germanic, for no better reason than that some of the secondary names of German literature have become identified with its folly." He was in the main right as to the collection of 1840, unless the climax of "Berenice" brings that tale within the province under ban. Nevertheless, there is pseudo-horror to be found in certain of his pieces, and enough of Ernst Hoffmann's method to suggest that the brilliant author of the "Fantasiestücke," whether a secondary name or not, was one of Poe's early teachers. Hoffmann's romance, like Poe's, was of the mixed type, a departure from pure romanticism, and in the "Weird Tales" there is perhaps more of everyday concern than in the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque." His most eccentric legends abound in German naïveté and domesticity. He drew charming mortal heroines. His Seraphinas, Annunciatas, Antonias, are the warm and breathing dames and donnas, while Poe's Eleonoras, Ligeias, and Morellas are the tapestry-figures, of mansions to which the younger romancer held his title by succession. Still, while Hoffmann was wholly of the Vaterland, and Poe a misfitted American, if the one had

died before the other's birth, instead of thirteen years later, there would be a chance for a pretty fancy in behalf of the doctrine of metempsychosis — which both these writers utilized.

Among authors of the penumbral cast, from Hoffmann to Leopardi, Baudelaire, and the monodist of "The City of Dreadful Night," — men whose records show that it is wise to confine the fever of romance to one's written page, — the temperaments and lives, even the features, of Hoffmann and Poe seem to be most nearly of the same type. Hoffmann was the more answerable for a disordered life, since he had the three arts of music, drawing, and letters, at his command, and could turn his hand to anything. He was often successful, and knew the good and bad of adulation, but the one thing he could not bear was success. Poe was equal to neither fortune. Both writers evaded prolonged effort, and brooded on the same themes — such as insanity, catalepsy, somnambulism, the Doppelgänger tradition, metempsychosis, conscience, terror, the weight of destiny and doom. Art was their common religion; but Poe regarded it the more seriously. Both — and in this they follow Tieck — exalted Music as the supernal art.

A reader of Hoffmann finds certain properties of the "House of Usher" and "Metzengerstein" in "Das Majorat;" in the ancestral castle of a noble family, on a wild and remote estate near the Baltic Sea, — the interior, where the moon shines through oriel windows upon tapestry and carven furniture and wainscoting, — the uncanny scratchings against a bricked-up door, — the old Freiherr foreseeing the hour of his death, — the ominous conflagration, — the turret falling of its own decay into a chasm at its base.

But Poe opposes a truer ideality to Hoffmann's verisimilitude. "Das Fräulein von Scudéri" contains a suggestion of his analytic method, which, however, in the quest for the assassin of the Rue Morgue throws both sentiment and legendary quite aside. "The Assignation" derives from Hoffmann's "Doge und Dogeresse," and the tableau with the Marchesa is a radiantly poetic variation upon the balcony scene in the earlier tale. Hoffmann's spell was unquestionable, and not without its hold on the Puritan author of "The House of the Seven Gables." Poe and Hawthorne have been called the last of the romancers, yet each was under the law of his environment. We have it in the swallow's song,

> "That bright and fierce and fickle is the South
> And dark and true and tender is the North."

Poe certainly had the Southern and cavalier temperament, through all his wanderings, but Hawthorne, with more than Southern pride, had ethics and endurance bred in the bone.

Doubtless Poe himself felt that he was at his highest mark in the empyreal studies, — those which relate to absolute and spiritual existence. His Monos and Una, Eiros and Charmion, are disembodied shades, or, rather, points of sheer intelligence, whose thoughts or lines of light flash symbols which the poet translates into mortal tones not wholly wanting the celestial charm. After these discourses, the tales of Old-World Romance bring us back to mortal passion and deed; at least, their tragedy does not borrow from the supramortal, except in "The Masque of the Red Death" and "Metzengerstein." The seven legends, each with the note of its own time and

country, unite with a certain prismatic or diatonic effect. Each probably came from some trace discovered in its author's reading; the "Red Death," it may be, from the introduction of a corpse at the revels, as chronicled by a noble of the Regency. "The Pit and the Pendulum," an inferior piece, is reminiscent of more than one English story, but noteworthy for its analysis of sensation after torture. More splendor and abandon and terror are compressed within the briefest of masterpieces, "The Masque of the Red Death," than would furbish forth the whole of "Vathek" save its final chapter. "The Cask of Amontillado" paints with a few strokes all that has been conceived of Roman pride and vengeance. The man who gave us these, and withal the intense color and sentiment of "The Assignation," was an artist indeed.

The Tales of Conscience, with the extraordinary confession of William Wilson at their head, show that the artist was a psychologist as well, although his insight was applied almost solely to the morbid processes of remorse and guilty fear. As we turn to his other stories, classified in the following volumes, it appears that some injustice has been done to his versatility, plainly owing to the monotone of his poems in verse and prose. The man is to be envied for his working hours, if pitied for his struggles and distraught career. He enjoyed the play of his mind as thoroughly as an athlete putting his thews to the test for the delight of action. This dreamer figures as the most alert of journalists in the banter and extravagance of minor pieces; he is an adept at laborious hoaxes and queerly elaborate imaginings of scientific experiment. We find him, most of all, pluming him-

self upon the intricate trail-hunting for which he developed such a bent in his creation, — by "The Purloined Letter," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," — of the far too vital school of police fiction. At the other extreme, and when most in earnest, he fails — as who indeed must not? — to solve the secret of the Absolute. Yet, considered neither as sound physics nor as metaphysics, how suggestive all this mass of fiction and speculation! The writings in which he becomes tedious, and often seems to labor, are tales of preposterous adventure, notably that of "Arthur Gordon Pym." This was not a very early work. As his juvenile efforts were poetic, so his second published tale was "Berenice," which has the qualities of his mature romance. After the "MS. Found in a Bottle," his first tale of incredible experiences seems to have been "Hans Pfaall." Despite the reflection of Irving's mock-style at the beginning and end of this piece, it has enough vraisemblance to hold the reader thoroughly, and the author carries his assumptions — as unwarrantable as those of Locke's "Moon Hoax," which he criticises roundly — by inventing incidents that divert attention at the critical moments of his sleight of hand. This is one of his neat processes in other work of the kind. Of his sea-tales the best that can be said is that they are not far out as respects the navigation and handling of old-time sailing craft, and indicate some touch of seamanship, or else a rare assimilation of matters then common in "narratives" of voyages, shipwreck, and perils of the deep. He understood a sail-boat when he wrote "Pym," and had plenty of the square-rigger's lingo at his tongue's end. One can imagine an eager, quick-witted boy

on his early Atlantic passages, taking in enough of the

> "— mystery of the ships,
> And the magic of the sea,"

to serve him cleverly in after-life. Yet "Pym" is wearisome from its length and for the overworked trick of minute detail. On the other hand, such a study as "The Man of the Crowd" reveals the true faculty of observation, — the same faculty which, exercised in newspaper-service, has had much to do with the rise and advance of a modern school of fiction. As an adroit narrative, of interest to young and old, with novel adventure and perfect convergence to the chief incident, "The Gold-bug" displays a fine combination of romantic and realistic methods. But for impressive maintenance of tone, and the absolute plausibility of both a theory and an intensely dramatic conception, — the two suggested by a curious law of physics, — "A Descent into the Maelström" is the nonpareil among the adventurous wonder-tales. There is scarcely a word of it without value, and it is finished to perfection. As to the detective-stories, "The Purloined Letter," though the shortest, is by far the most effective and most worth the attention of a select reader.

For this versatility, partly due to a weakness for impressing others with his many-sidedness, the vouchers are essays in the different classes of his work, — and with no great discrimination in favor of any one of them, — from the beginning of his fertile period to its untimely end. He took zest in turning from one field to another. And, in truth, the question of opposing methods in art resolves itself to this, — that romance or realism, or any other mode of the

day, will not fail of its intent, if there is power behind it. The variety of Poe's output was increased also by the conditions of his life. Admit, if you choose, Baudelaire's claim that this country was "only a vast prison which he traversed with the feverish agitation of a being made to breathe in a rarer world," and that his "inner life . . . was but a ceaseless effort to escape the influence of this antipathetic atmosphere." Then it must be owned that the situation enforced a professional activity, and in more directions than one. It often may have dulled his nobler mood, but it gave us some of the pieces that attracted most attention here and abroad, and that excited the peculiar interest in the man and his writings which time seems only to prolong.

A still remaining group of sketches, the æsthetic, remind us that his creed was formulated early and unchanged in after years. With Shelley he vowed he would dedicate his powers to Beauty. Trusting his own perceptions, in art as elsewhere, he gave his fancy play, and designed like a poet in scorn of the conditioned artificer. Baudelaire found in him "un amour insatiable du Beau, qui avait pris la puissance d'une passion morbide." At that time, the Anglo-American sense of the beautiful was put at fault by training amid styles, in all objects of use or ornament, which were uncouth and depressing. Poe, divided between appreciation of the antique and his appetite for the riches of the oriental and mediæval, — at once a Jew, a Grecian, and a Goth, — betook himself, by way of escape from the prevailing ugliness, to decoration and architecture *en Espagne*. In one direction he had seen what could be done. England excelled in the promotion of out-door beauty, and

he knew her landscape-gardening. He also knew the available beauty of nature in our own land, and it is charmingly inwrought with some of his tales. Downing had begun to excite at least an elementary concern in America for rural and landscape architecture. Poe's imagination, if he had been the Downing or Olmsted of his time, would have bankrupted the lordliest client. "The Domain of Arnheim" is an enchanting dream of what might be attempted by a new-world Kubla Khan. Its invoker could be elaborately simple, too, as in the restraint of "Landor's Cottage;" yet it is hard to see, with Baudelaire, that he had "une délicatesse exquise de sens qu'une note fausse torturait," — for his taste was not pure; his sense of perfection, his "finesse de goût," yielded when his oriental Jinnee made him free of barbaric pearl and gold. The element of strangeness, on which he laid so much stress, is not essential to the highest art, and the grotesque and the bizarre are at most but secondary resources. He perhaps realized his own composite temperament, and the indefiniteness of his knowledge and ideas; yet if it had not been for early malcontents, such as Poe, the renascence of taste would have been longer deferred. As it was, he enjoyed his stage-use of light, gems, fabrics, censers, and everything which constituted, to use his own term, the "decora" of his fiction. To be just, he gave evidence of something more than an uncritical lust for color and furnishings in the Old-World stories, in "Ligeia," and elsewhere. The incongruous magnificence lauded in "The Assignation" is offset, in the "Philosophy of Furniture," by a scheme of quiet harmony, for which he used merely the few values that he understood, including the rays of the "astral, not

solar," lamp. His frequent delight in sheer luxuriousness differs from that of the author of "Lothair;" it does not suggest the parvenu, but is primitive and childlike, — or, it may be, akin to that aerial castle-building which gives pathos to Hogarth's picture of "The Distressed Poet," lost to the squalor about him, and careless of the dun at his garret-door, as he bends over the manuscript of "Riches: A Poem."

Throughout the narrative-writings learned references and quotations are thrown in determinedly, bringing to mind the story of a more recent author, who, when asked by a lady if he had read the Book of Mormon, replied, — "Madam! I have read all books." A reviewer is forced to observe credentials for scholarship so obviously tendered. It was the fashion to precede tales and chapters with mottoes "out of the everywhere." Poe went far beyond this. Even so light and graceful a sketch as "The Island of the Fay," preluded by a Latin excerpt from Servius, begins by citing Marmontel, and within the first four pages refers besides to Balzac, Zimmerman, and Pomponius Mela. In nearly all his skits and pot-boilers he delighted thus to stuff his readers and rivals. His irregular nomadic life had made it unlikely that he should be a scholar, in the cloistral sense of the word, but he managed to make a good second to Bulwer, for instance, in putting on the air of one. Although Mrs. Browning, with a woman's way of turning off his kindly criticism of her own *négligements*, wrote to Horne that "Mr. Poe . . . sits somewhat loosely, probably, upon his classics," he had more knowledge of books ancient and modern than most of his compeers south of New England. Where and how did he pick it up? The self-training of genius is always a

marvel; and as for that of a working man-of-letters, none but those of the craft may comprehend it. Somehow they do manage to get hold, in youth, of the essential books, and usually of the same books in about the same order, with excursions right and left dependent on chance or specific attraction.

Poe was trained in good classical schools, even to the knack of Latin verse-making, seemingly unpractical, yet out of which so much has come, over and over again, for law and statesmanship and letters. He learned something of Greek, as well, and of French a great deal more. Think of what Greek did for Shelley, and for how few years he was really drilled in it. Poe had five years at Stoke Newington, and as many in a Latin school at Richmond; then private tutors, and a year at the learned University of Virginia, where he at least caught the atmosphere — and to some extent demoralized it. We are told of his regular attendance upon the classes in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and Italian; but even if he had been studious, as well as facile, we might easily believe that "he did not acquire a critical knowledge of these languages." Then, after three years of strange experiences, he endured eight months at West Point, where he demonstrated his gift for mathematics. All in all, an imperfect training for an exact scholar, but not a bad series of chances for a genius. After this came the practical facility of the hack-journalist, often inaccurate, but with an instinctively memorized equipment, a reference-knowledge of quite enough for his needs. It must be borne in mind that he did settle down to support his household by newspaper work in that meagre time. Bread-winning meant industry, but he had to write his finer tales as

best he could. If there had been the present literary "market," he possibly would have stayed at home and out of temptation, and have kept his product at the upper standard. This was, after all, his idea of happiness, and again and again he tried to realize it, but as often in vain.

It is clear that he made the utmost of his acquirements, and often utilized them for the professional bear-baiting in which he took delight. Nothing could be more cynical than the summary of his own devices, in the paper "How to write a Blackwood Article." His sarcastic instructions include "piquant expressions," for "there is no passing muster," he says, "without Spanish, Italian, German, Latin, and Greek;" above all, "nothing makes so fine a show as your Greek." As for current melodramatic topics, he satirizes "The Dead Alive," the "Confessions of an Opium Eater," and "The Man in the Bell." But he was of the company, and could not have selected more typical examples of a vein which it was his habit to work. Even that burlesque strain, "A Predicament," seems to reappear, made serious by a change of *tempo*, in "The Pit and the Pendulum."

Like some other magazine-writers, he was on the hunt for themes. The realists can have themes everywhere at hand, yet we find even them, with Zola at the front, journeying in observation-cars and promising a good report of their travels. Poe's reading helped him to keep the wolf from the door. His random extravaganzas, among which "Four Beasts in One" is a good selection, — with material suited to an Ebers, and its echo of the fifteenth idyl of Theocritus, — reveal his literary foraging. Some of them read almost like translations; for instance,

that picturesque whimsey, "The Duc de L'Omelette." Nevertheless, one obtains an impression from examination of these off-hand and very unequal miscellanies that the satirist had a better equipment than many critics, noting his lapses, have credited him with possessing. His matter, now for the first time awarded a patient editing, often was mangled in the slovenly newspapers and magazines where it originally appeared, and after his death was transferred with scarcely any revision to the pages of his collected "Works." It is but fair to say that after a fresh scrutiny of his text and citations, with allowance for the printer's errors, and still more for the author's too frequent haste, indifference, and physical set-backs, his bookish resources, such as they were, seem to have been cleverly put to use.

The poet-recounter could always fall back upon his resolving imagination. There is no evidence that he visited the countries where the scenes of his Old-World Romance are laid, but he captured the spirit of each until infused with it. In instinct for tone, he stands at the head. Following him up in other directions, we recognize his brain-power, the energy of a strong engine often in need of a steady driver. He was full of speculation, light and serious by turns, concerning the possibilities of science, and had the fine curiosity, if not the temper and habit, of a savant. Nothing of knowledge was alien to him; he had at least a capricious passion for intellectual truth, and a prophetic turn of his own. If there is any less basis for his postulate, in "Mesmeric Revelation," of spirit-matter than for our later theories, it would be difficult to prove it. The "magnetic" fetch, both absorbing and repulsive, entitled "The

Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," almost finds an antitype — whether the outcome of science or of imposture — in a tragedy just reported from Vienna, the utterances and startling death of a young woman under the experiments of Neukomm, the hypnotist. In mechanics, too, Poe's hoaxes are suggestive, and the airship which he sent across the Atlantic is the prototype of "La France" and of the speedier vessel now building on the same model. His respect for abstruse mathematical laws was intuitive, and he had that development of the head, in the region which the bump-guessing gentry allot to causality, which seems the cranial type of chess-players, mathematicians, and logicians. One wonders how he would have applied the analysis, set forth in his rationale of coin-matching, to our national game of poker, and whether — if the game had been in vogue at Charlottesville, in his University days, instead of games depending more upon chances of the cards — his record would have been one of losses; and again, whether, if the American Stock and Corn Exchanges then had been, as now, the national promoters of speculation, he would have been free, like Voltaire, to devote his higher thoughts to literature, while finding in the law of fluctuations a Fortunatus's purse. But temperament counts for even more than brain-power, in such matters. Besides, on 'Change, and doubtless on the turf, the master-spirits see to it that the "calculus of probabilities," on which Poe lays so much stress, — however surely it may tell in the long run, — is arbitrarily suspended until their designs are carried out. Meanwhile we find that any problem, large or small, excited Poe's analysis and ratiocination. He had an eye for details, and pre-

dicted the era of tall buildings in New York, forty years before the elevator-period. In social and political matters he was an ingrained Tory, and made various forecasts of troubles, under our system, curiously apt in view of modern strikes and rebellions. Foreign writers had done the same, but his ideas seem to be the outcome of his own reflection. In fine, the Tales confront us with no mean intellect, and its possessor could not fail to have opinions that were sincere, whatsoever his conduct of life and expression. Absorbed in his work, the best of the man sometimes came out. We also may admire his stand for the dignity of his profession and of the imaginative gift. It is to his lasting credit that, no matter from what motive, he spoke up proudly and bravely for the quality of the poet's mind; that he believed the greater faculty includes the less and that the best bard is the wisest, scouting, by the mouth of his favorite Dupin, the Philistine vulgarism that one is more likely to be a fool or a weakling because he is a poet.

Nowadays a literary style is often most in evidence through the effort to make it appear unstudied. Poe's mastery, like Ruskin's, is that of sheer intensity, poetic eloquence, and word-painting, in brilliant passages such as the iridescent and cumulative finale of "Arnheim." But of style in the modern sense, with its outlawry of stock words and phrases, adroit rather than instinctive grace and consonance, and the maintenance of a grade once taken, he was not a master, nor was there any master in his day. Just as little did he achieve Lowell's "exquisite something called Style, which, like the grace of perfect breeding, everywhere pervasive and nowhere emphatic, makes

itself felt by the skill with which it effaces itself, and masters us at last with a sense of indefinable completeness." To Lowell's afterthought he did attain, — to the expression of genius found "at last in style, which is the establishment of a perfect mutual understanding between the worker and his material;" since, flamboyant, and accentual to the point of scansion, as the poet-romancer's expression sometimes became, it answered his exact purpose, and was in the manner natural to one nurtured amid the debris of the Georgian period, and listening there to the cadences of Coleridge and De Quincey. Our young writers, chancing upon estrays from the minor romances of a time so far removed, find them as queer as the crippled odds and ends in a country garret; yet even those are fragments of an ensemble worth as much to its own generation as our modern household equipage to a critical possessor. Poe's genius, then, with further characteristics derived from German rhapsody and French art, did express itself in such wise that it is exceptional to mistake a bit of his work for that of another writer; yet its individuality is not so much a style as a method, and not so much a method as a manner. The force of nature sustains it in the rhetorical flights which it would now be bad form to essay. Then, too, we find as many shades of manner as we have found divisions of his work: passages in the tone of old chronicles, much like that inevitably struck by the translator of renaissance poetry — by Rossetti, for instance, in his version of the Vita Nuova; others echoing the hymnic voice of eld; while the romance-tales, almost for the first time in English, profit by the dramatic method and the exquisite condensation which made the French

conte, even in Poe's day, artistically so far superior to the prolix German *Erzählung*. Yet the legend in "The Oval Portrait" is the counterpart in manner of one in Longfellow's "Hyperion," and therefore Germanesque. Again, the grave and elevated tone of the celestial dialogues is half-caught from the stateliest English prose, — the prose of the philosophical divines. All these constituents, several or blended, are well adapted to Poe's use; our refinement and indifferentism would not serve instead. Entering his wonderland, one must forego the Dervish's ointment of disillusion, so invidious to the wizard and fatal to the delight obtainable from his enchantment.

Some of the Tales of Conscience are in the manner of Hawthorne, and the two romancers certainly ran neck-and-neck for a time. "The Man of the Crowd" seems written in the Salem custom-house; and anyone reading Hawthorne's farce, "Mrs. Bullfrog," might believe it to be one of Poe's extravaganzas. Poe's simple narrative style accords with the requirements, the language being journalistic and contemporary. In the hoaxes — the *supercheries littéraires* — and in his work as a hack feuilletonist, he strikes an irritating note of banter, that of a mental habit often perceptible in the critical sketches yet to come, which is peculiarly his own by so much as "the style is the man." He was quite as susceptible to influence as any of the victims whom he chastened. He caught the trick of De Quincey, in declamatory interpolations such as — "Then — let us bow down, Charmion, before the excessive majesty of the Great God!" and, in "The Black Cat," — "But may God shield and deliver me from the fangs of the Arch Fiend!"

The opening pages of "William Wilson" may almost be called a De Quincey gambit, and it is curious to read the paragraph ending with the words, "Oh, gigantic paradox, too utterly monstrous for solution!"

As a foil to the perfection of a few tales, his everyday looseness can be exasperating. He loads his narratives with enough of "however," "in fact," "it should be added," "to be sure," and the like, to increase their length appreciably, yet seems unconscious of this special vice. His discursive and ingenious mode of thought drove him to an absurd over-use of the parenthesis, and to such dependence upon the dash, in punctuation, that in self-justification he planned a discourse upon its utility. Between his own monomania and the usage in his day, the task of a logical repunctuation of his literary remains is most trying, yet still more indispensable. His vocabulary was meagre; pet words and phrases constantly recur, and many do service alike in his verse and prose. This is the more strange, considering his frequently incomparable artistic skill; as in the finely abrupt openings, and climacteric endings, of the "Maelström," "Red Death," "Amontillado," and Inquisition stories, and in sentences which intensify crises to which he has been leading. Such are the words in "Hans Pfaall": "The moon — the moon itself in all its glory — lay beneath me, and at my feet;" and such, in the Roman tale, is that last cry of the immured Fortunato, — "*For the love of God, Montresor!*" The recounter was not wanting, then, in phases of dramatic power, — in those requisite for a playwright of the higher melodrama; but of distinct impersonation and the subtler processes of the human will he had less command, chiefly from his lack of the objective insight.

Character did not seize upon his interest, except when marked by traits which he felt to be his own. The most dramatic contrasts, the irony of life, seemed to escape him; his protagonists are obviously in the rapids, themselves foreboding the end. There is nothing in the Tales to compare with the death of Browning's Prefect, stabbed as he lifts the arras, declaring that "for the first time" no ominous draught saluted him.

The element of human passion, so essential to dramatic force, is also absent, save in its minor chords of sorrow and despair. There are few notes of earthly love; the dreamer's Eros is all head and wings, as if etherealized from the sculptured genius of a tomb; his ecstasy is that of the nympholept seeking an evasive being of whom he has glimpses by moonlight, starlight, even fenlight, but never by noonday. Lured as he was by such an ideal, there is not the slightest trace, throughout his conceptions, of the sensuality, even of the sensuousness, upon which so many of the French writers expend their most artistic gifts of suggestion and charm. Gautier, a kinsman in all else than this, well might characterize his tales as "d'une chastité virginale et séraphique." As for mortal love, it may be that the poet had found contentment; but his spiritual and intellectual desire looked among the stars.

The true dramatic faculty, again, is inclusive, lighting its web of life with laughter, though it moistens it with blood and tears. Poe, with his intolerance of dulness and cant, had a keen sense of the absurd, yet was no more of a humorist than any autocrat who tweaks the ears of a blunderer, or any harlequin that twists himself awry and makes droll faces. Even in

his wit there is nothing mellow, and not much spontaneity, while his forced humor is of the sort denominated grim, or else grotesque, impish, gargoylean. The strain of banter in his minor pieces seems the effort of one essaying the humorist's art until the practice of it should make him humorous. If there is any quality that, in Dogberry's phrase, must come by nature, it is humor, and next to that, wit. Poe's frequent awkwardness in the display of either was predicable of his self-engrossed temperament.

The revelation of that temperament in these enthralling and often piteous stories lends force to the saying that absolute impersonality is almost unknown in art. This will hardly be disputed, concerning any form of art, when applied to the difficulty of effacing one's natural style otherwise than by a passing effort. But the saying is meant to apply more broadly; in the case of a writer, for example, to avow that his traits and something of his experience are deducible even from works which are professedly impersonal. There could be few more pertinent cases in illustration than that of Poe, though he had written nothing but the tales composed with purely artistic intent; for in writing those he supplied a notable addition to the list of men of genius whose morbid anatomy needs no other demonstrator than its vivid self-revelation. Their author was a being of extreme physical and spiritual sensibility, proudly reliant upon his mental force, and terribly cognizant of his infirmities; so intent upon the one and the other as to bound a world by his own horizon. The insight that goes beyond self-experience requires an altruism which he did not possess. His consciousness of power underlies the easy assumption of mastery which characterizes his ideality and ratiocination.

More notable, and painfully so in view of his career, is the indirect confession of his weaknesses, struggles, defeat. There was a spell on this froward child of art and song, no less than the egoism of a nature demanding that nothing of itself should be forgotten — bidding the world to know it as it was or as its possessor thought it to be. There was less of posing in his case than we have learned to expect from men of romantic genius; his pride, contempt, and caprice, as well as his sufferings, were inherent and genuine. Evidently he was the victim of a neurotic malaise, intensified by frequent excesses, and the theory is credible that he owed to feverish crises some of his most striking notes and fantasies. Such things do come to artists in the watches of the night, in the abnormal tension following excess; but so also come remorse, terror, nervous anguish, the feeling of Nemesis and despair. With all of these Poe was only too familiar. The fear of the old man suddenly awakened, in "The Tell-Tale Heart," he well had known. The alcoholic and narcotic horrors of "The Black Cat," the "Ragged Mountains," and other tales, were the Alastors of a doleful land where gloomed his own valley of the shadow. It often has been noted that "William Wilson" contains a memoir of his childhood; but there, too, the darker side of his spiritual portrait is given. Yet in that tale the hapless author did himself a wrong. With all his recklessness, he was neither vicious nor criminal, and he never succeeded or wished to succeed in putting down his conscience. That stayed by him to the bitter end, and perhaps the end was speedier for its companionship.

As a romancer, then, no less than as a poet, he was

his own protagonist, and, indeed, his use of himself as a study breaks out everywhere in trivial matters of allusion. Self-delineation is evident in the portraits of Legrand, Landor, Dupin, and more ominously in those of Usher and the lover of the Marchesa Aphrodite. He plainly ascribes to heredity many of his gifts and failings, and not without a certain aristocratic pride in both. Over all in significance, we find the master-key to his temper and conduct in the adroit analysis of "The Imp of the Perverse." The self-torturing wilfulness that seized him at his most courageous and ennobling moments, just as it seizes upon a fair woman or a petted child, was beyond his power to exorcise. To that force prompting us to act "for the reason that we should not," an impulse from which none is wholly free, Poe too often was utterly subjected.

In conclusion, it would be difficult to measure the dynamic value of his genius, if restricted to what can be traced of its effect upon literature. His work was done at a time somewhat unfavorable to the spread of his typical method; but, as to that, it is doubtful whether at any time it would be taken up by clever followers. An ambitious writer does not choose a master whose mode, if followed, will lessen his own claim to originality. This may be one ground for the belief that the greatest writers do not found schools. In the case of Poe it is clear that his manner was too individual for frequent adoption. As to the realistic side of his work, we feel that the contemporaneous seldom interested him, unless so abnormal as to call upon his intellect for an examination of its cause and process.

Under these conditions it is equally difficult to judge

of his limitations. It hardly can be said that he affected the philosophy of life, or the spirit of art itself, or that he introduced a new class of fiction — except one inspired by the success of what he would not have claimed to be his most enviable work. His vogue among the French writers has long been evident, and was from the first the natural result of his assimilation of their own artistic feeling. The allurement was enhanced by their perception of an added flavor, the indefinite suggestion of something unwonted, gained from a new clime; and this in spite of the belief that "les idées américaines" are nothing more than sentiments "dear to the Philistines of two worlds." It is true that England made an earlier acquaintance with the American romancer; in fact, his first editions of "Pym" and the "Tales" were brought out in London close upon their appearance in New York. Since his death many editions of his works, either in part or in whole, have been published in Great Britain, all of which, with the exception of one reprint of the poems, as well as all of those in the United States, have followed the imperfect text of the first inclusive collection. Germany, watchful of English literature and inherently romantic, was the next country to reprint the Tales, not only as translated but in their original text. But the genius of Poe was to find the most sympathetic recognition in Paris, where he was really introduced, although selections from his writings were already in the French, by the author of *Les Fleurs du Mal* — a man so possessed with Poe's spirit as to force one biographer to declare that the American author held in the intellectual existence of his translator so large a place that it was indispensable to dwell upon it, even apart from the

biographical coincidences, in any estimation of Baudelaire's views; and, again, that the names of the two men were thenceforth so inseparable that the memory of one immediately called up the thought of the other, — for, he adds ingenuously, it even seems at times, "que les idées de l'Américain appartiennent en propre au Français." Poe's chief influence upon Baudelaire's own productions relates to poetry, and is worth attention hereafter, in view of Baudelaire as a precursor of the modern French school. But it is true that Baudelaire moved and talked with no other thought than that of his transatlantic master, and devoted himself to reproducing the latter's works. This, Gautier says, was what made his own name famous; for in France, he intimates (this was in '68), poets are only read in their prose, and through this prose their poems become known. However this might then have been, Baudelaire's almost complete translations of Poe's Tales and speculative writings, appearing from 1855 to 1865, are a miracle of accuracy and effective grace. Through his devotion, and with the means afforded by the perfect coördination of the French language, the versions, while absolutely faithful, not only justify Gautier's statement that they produce the effect of original works, but almost incline us to surmise, with Charles Asselineau, that the text even gains in some respects by such an interpretation. It is not only rendered exquisitely, but properly revised, and on the whole obtains an editing such as Poe, for half a century, has never received in his own country. No later French translations could supersede Baudelaire's, nor have any been attempted. They have gone through many editions, and are still in demand; the result being that in France Poe is distinctly esteemed. His

rating there, as a literary artist, may result somewhat from that trait, common to us all, which made Emerson think highly of disciples who rehearsed to him his own ideas embodied in new terms. It did not take long for Madrid to discover Poe, after Paris had found him out, a Spanish version of his select tales appearing, as *Historias Extraordinarias*, in 1858–59. The first Italian translation, *Racconti Incredibili*, was published in 1876. Poe could teach the Continental writers very little in the art of perfecting their own romance. His analytic tales made a great impression. Their ratiocination, applied to the solution of criminal mysteries, captured the Parisian fancy more readily than the quality of his other prose writings. Since then, detective stories of high and low degree have been written in France, England, and America; but no amateur, with a genius approximating to that of "Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin," has appeared, and had his exploits recounted, in our own or foreign literature.

The romancer, then, figures as the progenitor of our crypto-analytic fiction. As a poetic tale-writer, whose mind was haunted by artistic dreams, but who flourished in a country where constructive beauty was yet to come, he still excites a more than common interest; although his computable influence is not proportioned to the taking-up of his name, the idealization of his traits and career, in more lands than one. His romances, in truth, were a bright and burning row of cressets set up at the terminus, rather than at the beginning, of a literary era. If there was any impulse to copy them, it was disobeyed under the stress of that incoming naturalism which relegated their phase to an artificial past. Since their author's time,

the "short story" has been engrafted upon Anglo-Saxon literature, but scarcely in consequence of his examples; it is not Poe's short story, not that of the French and cognate schools, — though our writers gain more than Poe's equipment, from the modern blending of all cults and methods. The short story of England and America is specifically English or American, except as written by the few who are enamoured of the French mode, and who have the desire and the grace to rival it.

What remains, and may be of higher value, is the indirect effect, upon our present literature, of Poe's theory and career. He started a revolt against "the didactic," and was our national propagandist of the now hackneyed formula, Art for Art's sake, and of the creed that in perfect beauty consists the fullest truth. The question of his influence in this wise, upon later enthusiasts, would lead us forthwith into the by-ways of personal confession, of individual experience and result.

The winnow of time, no less, has set apart the writings of Poe from almost the entire yield of those American contemporaries whose lives were not prolonged far beyond his own. These Tales, which now have been examined with the respect due to works that have taken rank in literary annals, were written by an ill-paid journalist, at a time when his own country depended on foreign spoliation for its imaginative reading. When they show him at his worst, his exigencies justly may be borne in mind; if his style seems often formless and disjointed, it must be remembered that he wrote before the days of Arnold and Pater, of Flaubert, Daudet, and Maupassant. He has left us something of his best; and, when all is said,

there are few more beautiful harmonies of thought and sound and color than those presented in "Shadow," "Silence," and "Eleonora," or in "The Masque of the Red Death;" nor is there any such a trilogy, in our own literature, of prose romances taking wings of poetry at their will, as "Ligeia," "The Assignation," and "The Fall of the House of Usher." Through all of these, moreover, there is an impression of some dramatic energy in reserve, which, had it not seemed otherwise to the fates, might have enabled this Numpholeptos to escape from out his "pallid limit" of the moonbeam, — even to

> "pass that goal,
> Gain love's birth at the limit's happier verge,
> And, where an iridescence lurks, but urge
> The hesitating pallor on to prime
> Of dawn."

E. C. S.

I

ROMANCES OF DEATH

123

OVERTURE

SHADOW — A PARABLE

Yea! though I walk through the valley of the Shadow.
PSALM OF DAVID.

YE who read are still among the living; but I who write shall have long since gone my way into the region of shadows. For indeed strange things shall happen, and secret things be known, and many centuries shall pass away, ere these memorials be seen of men. And, when seen, there will be some to disbelieve, and some to doubt, and yet a few who will find much to ponder upon in the characters here graven with a stylus of iron.

The year had been a year of terror, and of feelings more intense than terror for which there is no name upon the earth. For many prodigies and signs had taken place, and far and wide, over sea and land, the black wings of the Pestilence were spread abroad. To those, nevertheless, cunning in the stars, it was not unknown that the heavens wore an aspect of ill; and to me, the Greek Oinos, among others, it was evident that now had arrived the alternation of that seven hundred and ninety-fourth year when, at the entrance of Aries, the planet Jupiter is conjoined with

the red ring of the terrible Saturnus. The peculiar spirit of the skies, if I mistake not greatly, made itself manifest, not only in the physical orb of the earth, but in the souls, imaginations, and meditations of mankind.

Over some flasks of the red Chian wine, within the walls of a noble hall in a dim city called Ptolemais, we sat at night, a company of seven. And to our chamber there was no entrance save by a lofty door of brass; and the door was fashioned by the artisan Corinnos, and, being of rare workmanship, was fastened from within. Black draperies, likewise, in the gloomy room, shut out from our view the moon, the lurid stars, and the peopleless streets — but the boding and the memory of Evil, they would not be so excluded. There were things around us and about of which I can render no distinct account — things material and spiritual: heaviness in the atmosphere, a sense of suffocation, anxiety — and, above all, that terrible state of existence which the nervous experience when the senses are keenly living and awake, and meanwhile the powers of thought lie dormant. A dead weight hung upon us. It hung upon our limbs, upon the household furniture, upon the goblets from which we drank; and all things were depressed, and borne down thereby — all things save only the flames of the seven iron lamps which illumined our revel. Uprearing themselves in tall slender lines of light, they thus remained burning, all pallid and motionless; and in the mirror which their lustre formed upon the round table of ebony at which we sat, each of us there assembled beheld the pallor of his own countenance, and the unquiet glare in the downcast eyes of his companions. Yet we laughed and were merry in our

proper way — which was hysterical: and sang the songs of Anacreon — which are madness; and drank deeply — although the purple wine reminded us of blood. For there was yet another tenant of our chamber in the person of young Zoilus. Dead and at full length he lay, enshrouded: the genius and the demon of the scene. Alas! he bore no portion in our mirth, save that his countenance, distorted with the plague, and his eyes in which Death had but half extinguished the fire of the pestilence, seemed to take such interest in our merriment as the dead may haply take in the merriment of those who are to die. But although I, Oinos, felt that the eyes of the departed were upon me, still I forced myself not to perceive the bitterness of their expression, and, gazing down steadily into the depths of the ebony mirror, sang with a loud and sonorous voice the songs of the son of Teios. But gradually my songs they ceased, and their echoes, rolling afar off among the sable draperies of the chamber, became weak, and undistinguishable, and so faded away. And lo! from among those sable draperies where the sounds of the song departed, there came forth a dark and undefined shadow — a shadow such as the moon, when low in heaven, might fashion from the figure of a man; but it was the shadow neither of man, nor of God, nor of any familiar thing. And quivering awhile among the draperies of the room, it at length rested in full view upon the surface of the door of brass. But the shadow was vague, and formless, and indefinite, and was the shadow neither of man nor of God — neither God of Greece, nor God of Chaldæa, nor any Egyptian God. And the shadow rested upon the brazen doorway, and under the arch of the entablature of the door, and

moved not, nor spoke any word, but there became stationary and remained. And the door whereupon the shadow rested was, if I remember aright, over against the feet of the young Zoilus enshrouded. But we, the seven there assembled, having seen the shadow as it came out from among the draperies, dared not steadily behold it, but cast down our eyes, and gazed continually into the depths of the mirror of ebony. And at length I, Oinos, speaking some low words, demanded of the shadow its dwelling and its appellation. And the shadow answered, "I am SHADOW, and my dwelling is near to the Catacombs of Ptolemais, and hard by those dim plains of Helusion which border upon the foul Charonian canal." And then did we, the seven, start from our seats in horror, and stand trembling, and shuddering, and aghast: for the tones in the voice of the shadow were not the tones of any one being, but of a multitude of beings, and, varying in their cadences from syllable to syllable, fell duskily upon our ears in the well remembered and familiar accents of many thousand departed friends.

TERRESTRIAL

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

THE FALL

OF

THE HOUSE OF USHER

Son cœur est un luth suspendu ;
Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne.
BÉRANGER.

DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was — but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me — upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain, upon the bleak walls, upon the vacant eye-like windows, upon a few rank sedges, and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees — with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveller upon opium: the bitter lapse into every-

day life, the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart, an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it — I paused to think — what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there *are* combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate, its capacity for sorrowful impression; and acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down — but with a shudder even more thrilling than before — upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country — a letter from him — which in its wildly importunate nature had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness, of a mental dis-

order which oppressed him, and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said — it was the apparent *heart* that went with his request — which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although as boys we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested of late in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth at no period any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other — it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission from sire to son of the patrimony with the name,

which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the "House of Usher" — an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment, that of looking down within the tarn, had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition — for why should I not so term it? — served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy — a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity: an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn: a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary

dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the studio of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me — while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy — while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this — I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity.

He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality — of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé* man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion;

an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence, an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy, an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision — that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and

hollow-sounding enunciation — that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance — which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy — a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. "I shall perish," said he, "I *must* perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect — in terror. In this unnerved — in this pitiable condition, I feel that

the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR."

I learned moreover at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth — in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be re-stated — an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit — an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the morale of his existence.

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin — to the severe and long-continued illness, indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution, of a tenderly beloved sister — his sole companion for long years, his last and only relative on earth. "Her decease," he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, "would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers." While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread, and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her

retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother; but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain — that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself; and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavors to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly because I shuddered knowing not why; — from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least, in the circumstances then surrounding me, there arose, out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.

One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device.

Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid *facility* of his impromptus could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasias (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness, on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled "The Haunted Palace," ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus: —

I

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace —
Radiant palace — reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there;
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

II

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This — all this — was in the olden
Time long ago)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

III

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tunèd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene,
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

IV

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

V

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

VI

And travellers now within that valley
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh — but smile no more.

I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad led us into a train of thought, wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so much on account of its novelty, (for other men[1] have thought thus,) as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But in his disordered fancy the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest *abandon* of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers.

[1] Watson, Dr. Percival, Spallanzani, and especially the Bishop of Landaff. — See "Chemical Essays," vol. v.

The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones — in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many fungi which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around — above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence — the evidence of the sentience — was to be seen, he said (and I here started as he spoke), in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made *him* what I now saw him — what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

Our books — the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid — were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the Ververt and Chartreuse of Gresset; the Belphegor of Machiavelli; the Heaven and Hell of Swedenborg; the Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm by Holberg; the Chiromancy of Robert Flud, of Jean D'Indaginé, and of De la Chambre; the Journey into the Blue Distance of Tieck; and the City of the Sun of Campanella. One favorite volume was a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and Ægipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an

exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic — the manual of a forgotten church — the *Vigiliæ Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ.*

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment.

It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and in later days as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead — for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house.

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner

had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue — but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was laboring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified — that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch, while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavored to believe that much, if not all, of what I felt was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room — of the dark and tattered draperies which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremor gradu-

ally pervaded my frame; and at length there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened — I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me — to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste, (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night,) and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped with a gentle touch at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan — but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes — an evidently restrained hysteria in his whole demeanor. His air appalled me — but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

"And you have not seen it?" he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence — "you have not then seen it? — but, stay! you shall." Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous

yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this; yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars, nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion.

"You must not — you shall not behold this!" said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him with a gentle violence from the window to a seat. "These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon — or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement; the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favorite romances. I will read, and you shall listen; — and so we will pass away this terrible night together."

The antique volume which I had taken up was the "Mad Trist" of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favorite of Usher's more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It

was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the Trist, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus: —

"And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and maliceful turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and with blows made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest."

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me) — it appeared to me that from some very remote portion of the mansion there came, indistinctly,

to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story: —

"But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the maliceful hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanor, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten —

> Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;
> Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win.

And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard."

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement; for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound — the exact counterpart of what my

fancy had already conjured up for the dragon's unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of this second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had during the last few minutes taken place in his demeanor. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast — yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea — for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded: —

"And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound."

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than — as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver — I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

"Not hear it? — yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long — long — long — many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it — yet I dared not — oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am! — I dared not — I *dared* not speak! *We have put her living in the tomb!* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them — many, many days ago — yet I dared not — *I dared not speak!* And now — to-night — Ethelred — ha! ha! — the breaking of the hermit's door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield! — say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh, whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and

horrible beating of her heart? Madman!" — here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul — "*Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!*"

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell, the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust — but then without those doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold — then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and, in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure, of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened — there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind — the entire orb of the satellite

burst at once upon my sight — my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder — there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters — and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the "*House of Usher*."

BERENICE

Dicebant mihi sodales, si sepulchrum amicæ visitarem, curas meas aliquantulum fore levatas. — EBN ZAIAT.

MISERY is manifold. The wretchedness of earth is multiform. Overreaching the wide horizon as the rainbow, its hues are as various as the hues of that arch — as distinct too, yet as intimately blended. Overreaching the wide horizon as the rainbow! How is it that from beauty I have derived a type of unloveliness? — from the covenant of peace, a simile of sorrow? But as, in ethics, evil is a consequence of good, so, in fact, out of joy is sorrow born. Either the memory of past bliss is the anguish of to-day, or the agonies which *are* have their origin in the ecstasies which *might have been*.

My baptismal name is Egæus; that of my family I will not mention. Yet there are no towers in the land more time-honored than my gloomy, gray, hereditary halls. Our line has been called a race of visionaries; and in many striking particulars — in the character of the family mansion, in the frescos of the chief saloon, in the tapestries of the dormitories, in the chiselling of some buttresses in the armory, but more especially in the gallery of antique paintings, in the fashion of the library chamber, and, lastly, in the very peculiar nature of the library's contents — there is more than sufficient evidence to warrant the belief.

The recollections of my earliest years are connected with that chamber, and with its volumes — of which latter I will say no more. Here died my mother. Herein was I born. But it is mere idleness to say that I had not lived before — that the soul has no previous existence. You deny it? — let us not argue the matter. Convinced myself, I seek not to convince. There is, however, a remembrance of aerial forms, of spiritual and meaning eyes, of sounds musical yet sad; a remembrance which will not be excluded; a memory like a shadow — vague, variable, indefinite, unsteady — and like a shadow, too, in the impossibility of my getting rid of it while the sunlight of my reason shall exist.

In that chamber was I born. Thus awaking from the long night of what seemed, but was not, nonentity, at once into the very regions of fairy-land, into a palace of imagination, into the wild dominions of monastic thought and erudition, it is not singular that I gazed around me with a startled and ardent eye — that I loitered away my boyhood in books, and dissipated my youth in revery; but it *is* singular that, as years rolled away, and the noon of manhood found me still in the mansion of my fathers, it *is* wonderful what stagnation there fell upon the springs of my life — wonderful how total an inversion took place in the character of my commonest thought. The realities of the world affected me as visions, and as visions only, while the wild ideas of the land of dreams became, in turn, not the material of my every-day existence, but in very deed that existence utterly and solely in itself.

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Berenice and I were cousins, and we grew up together in my paternal halls. Yet differently we grew

— I, ill of health, and buried in gloom — she, agile, graceful, and overflowing with energy; hers, the ramble on the hillside — mine, the studies of the cloister; I, living within my own heart, and addicted, body and soul, to the most intense and painful meditation — she, roaming carelessly through life, with no thought of the shadows in her path, or the silent flight of the raven-winged hours. Berenice! — I call upon her name — Berenice! — and from the gray ruins of memory a thousand tumultuous recollections are startled at the sound. Ah, vividly is her image before me now, as in the early days of her light-heartedness and joy! O gorgeous yet fantastic beauty! O sylph amid the shrubberies of Arnheim! O Naiad among its fountains! And then — then all is mystery and terror, and a tale which should not be told. Disease, a fatal disease, fell like the simoon upon her frame; and, even while I gazed upon her, the spirit of change swept over her, pervading her mind, her habits, and her character, and, in a manner the most subtle and terrible, disturbing even the identity of her person. Alas! the destroyer came and went: and the victim — where was she? I knew her not — or knew her no longer as Berenice!

Among the numerous train of maladies superinduced by that fatal and primary one which effected a revolution of so horrible a kind in the moral and physical being of my cousin, may be mentioned as the most distressing and obstinate in its nature, a species of epilepsy not unfrequently terminating in *trance* itself — trance very nearly resembling positive dissolution, and from which her manner of recovery was in most instances startlingly abrupt. In the mean time, my own disease — for I have been told that I should call

it by no other appellation — my own disease, then, grew rapidly upon me, and assumed finally a monomaniac character of a novel and extraordinary form, hourly and momently gaining vigor, and at length obtaining over me the most incomprehensible ascendency. This monomania, if I must so term it, consisted in a morbid irritability of those properties of the mind in metaphysical science termed the *attentive*. It is more than probable that I am not understood; but I fear, indeed, that it is in no manner possible to convey to the mind of the merely general reader, an adequate idea of that nervous *intensity of interest* with which, in my case, the powers of meditation (not to speak technically) busied and buried themselves, in the contemplation of even the most ordinary objects of the universe.

To muse for long unwearied hours, with my attention riveted to some frivolous device on the margin or in the typography of a book; to become absorbed, for the better part of a summer's day, in a quaint shadow falling aslant upon the tapestry or upon the floor; to lose myself, for an entire night, in watching the steady flame of a lamp, or the embers of a fire; to dream away whole days over the perfume of a flower; to repeat, monotonously, some common word, until the sound, by dint of frequent repetition, ceased to convey any idea whatever to the mind; to lose all sense of motion or physical existence, by means of absolute bodily quiescence long and obstinately persevered in: such were a few of the most common and least pernicious vagaries induced by a condition of the mental faculties, not, indeed, altogether unparalleled, but certainly bidding defiance to anything like analysis or explanation.

Yet let me not be misapprehended. The undue, earnest, and morbid attention, thus excited by objects in their own nature frivolous, must not be confounded in character with that ruminating propensity common to all mankind, and more especially indulged in by persons of ardent imagination. It was not even, as might be at first supposed, an extreme condition, or exaggeration of such propensity, but primarily and essentially distinct and different. In the one instance, the dreamer, or enthusiast, being interested by an object usually *not* frivolous, imperceptibly loses sight of this object in a wilderness of deductions and suggestions issuing therefrom, until, at the conclusion of a day-dream *often replete with luxury*, he finds the *incitamentum*, or first cause of his musings, entirely vanished and forgotten. In my case, the primary object was *invariably frivolous*, although assuming, through the medium of my distempered vision, a refracted and unreal importance. Few deductions, if any, were made; and those few pertinaciously returning in upon the original object as a centre. The meditations were *never* pleasurable; and, at the termination of the revery, the first cause, so far from being out of sight, had attained that supernaturally exaggerated interest which was the prevailing feature of the disease. In a word, the powers of mind more particularly exercised were, with me, as I have said before, the *attentive*, and are, with the day-dreamer, the *speculative*.

My books, at this epoch, if they did not actually serve to irritate the disorder, partook, it will be perceived, largely, in their imaginative and inconsequential nature, of the characteristic qualities of the disorder itself. I well remember, among others, the

treatise of the noble Italian, Cœlius Secundus Curio, "*De Amplitudine Beati Regni Dei;*" Saint Austin's great work, "The City of God;" and Tertullian's "*De Carne Christi*," in which the paradoxical sentence, "*Mortuus est Dei filius; credibile est quia ineptum est; et sepultus resurrexit; certum est quia impossibile*," — occupied my undivided time, for many weeks of laborious and fruitless investigation.

Thus it will appear that, shaken from its balance only by trivial things, my reason bore resemblance to that ocean-crag spoken of by Ptolemy Hephestion, which, steadily resisting the attacks of human violence and the fiercer fury of the waters and the winds, trembled only to the touch of the flower called Asphodel. And although, to a careless thinker, it might appear a matter beyond doubt that the alteration produced by her unhappy malady, in the *moral* condition of Berenice, would afford me many objects for the exercise of that intense and abnormal meditation whose nature I have been at some trouble in explaining, yet such was not in any degree the case. In the lucid intervals of my infirmity, her calamity indeed gave me pain, and, taking deeply to heart that total wreck of her fair and gentle life, I did not fail to ponder frequently and bitterly upon the wonder-working means by which so strange a revolution had been so suddenly brought to pass. But these reflections partook not of the idiosyncrasy of my disease, and were such as would have occurred, under similar circumstances, to the ordinary mass of mankind. True to its own character, my disorder revelled in the less important but more startling changes wrought in the *physical* frame of Berenice — in the singular and most appalling distortion of her personal identity.

During the brightest days of her unparalleled beauty, most surely I had never loved her. In the strange anomaly of my existence, feelings with me had never been of the heart, and my passions always were of the mind. Through the gray of the early morning, among the trellised shadows of the forest at noonday, and in the silence of my library at night, she had flitted by my eyes, and I had seen her, not as the living and breathing Berenice, but as the Berenice of a dream; not as a being of the earth, earthy, but as the abstraction of such a being; not as a thing to admire, but to analyze; not as an object of love, but as the theme of the most abstruse although desultory speculation. And *now* — now I shuddered in her presence, and grew pale at her approach; yet, bitterly lamenting her fallen and desolate condition, I called to mind that she had loved me long, and in an evil moment I spoke to her of marriage.

And at length the period of our nuptials was approaching, when, upon an afternoon in the winter of the year — one of those unseasonably warm, calm, and misty days which are the nurse of the beautiful Halcyon,[1] — I sat, (and sat, as I thought, alone,) in the inner apartment of the library. But, uplifting my eyes, I saw that Berenice stood before me.

Was it my own excited imagination — or the misty influence of the atmosphere — or the uncertain twilight of the chamber — or the gray draperies which fell around her figure — that caused in it so vacillating and indistinct an outline? I could not tell. She spoke no word; and I — not for worlds could I have

[1] "For as Jove, during the winter season, gives twice seven days of warmth, men have called this clement and temperate time the nurse of the beautiful Halcyon." SIMONIDES.

uttered a syllable. An icy chill ran through my frame; a sense of insufferable anxiety oppressed me; a consuming curiosity pervaded my soul; and, sinking back upon the chair, I remained for some time breathless and motionless, with my eyes riveted upon her person. Alas! its emaciation was excessive, and not one vestige of the former being lurked in any single line of the contour. My burning glances at length fell upon the face.

The forehead was high, and very pale, and singularly placid; and the once jetty hair fell partially over it, and overshadowed the hollow temples with innumerable ringlets, now of a vivid yellow, and jarring discordantly, in their fantastic character, with the reigning melancholy of the countenance. The eyes were lifeless, and lustreless, and seemingly pupilless, and I shrank involuntarily from their glassy stare to the contemplation of the thin and shrunken lips. They parted; and in a smile of peculiar meaning, *the teeth* of the changed Berenice disclosed themselves slowly to my view. Would to God that I had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died!

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The shutting of a door disturbed me, and, looking up, I found that my cousin had departed from the chamber. But from the disordered chamber of my brain, had not, alas! departed, and would not be driven away, the white and ghastly *spectrum* of the teeth. Not a speck on their surface, not a shade on their enamel, not an indenture in their edges, but what that brief period of her smile had sufficed to brand in upon my memory. I saw them *now* even more unequivocally than I beheld them *then*. The teeth! — the teeth! — they were here, and there, and everywhere,

and visibly and palpably before me; long, narrow, and excessively white, with the pale lips writhing about them, as in the very moment of their first terrible development. Then came the full fury of my monomania, and I struggled in vain against its strange and irresistible influence. In the multiplied objects of the external world I had no thoughts but for the teeth. For these I longed with a frenzied desire. All other matters and all different interests became absorbed in their single contemplation. They — they alone were present to the mental eye, and they, in their sole individuality, became the essence of my mental life. I held them in every light. I turned them in every attitude. I surveyed their characteristics. I dwelt upon their peculiarities. I pondered upon their conformation. I mused upon the alteration in their nature. I shuddered as I assigned to them, in imagination, a sensitive and sentient power, and, even when unassisted by the lips, a capability of moral expression. Of Mademoiselle Sallé it has been well said, "*Que tous ses pas étaient des sentiments*," and of Berenice I more seriously believed *que toutes ses dents étaient des idées. Des idées!* — ah, here was the idiotic thought that destroyed me! *Des idées!* — ah, *therefore* it was that I coveted them so madly! I felt that their possession could alone ever restore me to peace, in giving me back to reason.

And the evening closed in upon me thus — and then the darkness came, and tarried, and went — and the day again dawned — and the mists of a second night were now gathering around — and still I sat motionless in that solitary room — and still I sat buried in meditation — and still the *phantasma* of the teeth maintained its terrible ascendency, as, with the most

vivid and hideous distinctness, it floated about amid the changing lights and shadows of the chamber. At length there broke in upon my dreams a cry as of horror and dismay; and thereunto, after a pause, succeeded the sound of troubled voices, intermingled with many low moanings of sorrow or of pain. I arose from my seat and, throwing open one of the doors of the library, saw standing out in the antechamber a servant maiden, all in tears, who told me that Berenice was — no more! She had been seized with epilepsy in the early morning, and now, at the closing in of the night, the grave was ready for its tenant, and all the preparations for the burial were conpleted.

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I found myself sitting in the library, and again sitting there alone. It seemed that I had newly awakened from a confused and exciting dream. I knew that it was now midnight, and I was well aware that, since the setting of the sun, Berenice had been interred. But of that dreary period which intervened I had no positive, at least no definite, comprehension. Yet its memory was replete with horror — horror more horrible from being vague, and terror more terrible from ambiguity. It was a fearful page in the record of my existence, written all over with dim, and hideous, and unintelligible recollections. I strived to decipher them, but in vain; while ever and anon, like the spirit of a departed sound, the shrill and piercing shriek of a female voice seemed to be ringing in my ears. I had done a deed — what was it? I asked myself the question aloud, and the whispering echoes of the chamber answered me, — "*What was it?*"

On the table beside me burned a lamp, and near it

lay a little box. It was of no remarkable character, and I had seen it frequently before, for it was the property of the family physician; but how came it *there*, upon my table, and why did I shudder in regarding it? These things were in no manner to be accounted for, and my eyes at length dropped to the open pages of a book, and to a sentence underscored therein. The words were the singular but simple ones of the poet Ebn Zaiat: — "*Dicebant mihi sodales si sepulchrum amicæ visitarem, curas meas aliquantulum fore levatas.*" Why, then, as I perused them, did the hairs of my head erect themselves on end, and the blood of my body become congealed within my veins?

There came a light tap at the library door — and, pale as the tenant of a tomb, a menial entered upon tiptoe. His looks were wild with terror, and he spoke to me in a voice tremulous, husky, and very low. What said he? — some broken sentences I heard. He told of a wild cry disturbing the silence of the night — of the gathering together of the household — of a search in the direction of the sound; and then his tones grew thrillingly distinct as he whispered me of a violated grave — of a disfigured body enshrouded, yet still breathing — still palpitating — *still alive!*

He pointed to my garments; they were muddy and clotted with gore. I spoke not, and he took me gently by the hand: it was indented with the impress of human nails. He directed my attention to some object against the wall. I looked at it for some minutes: it was a spade. With a shriek I bounded to the table, and grasped the box that lay upon it. But I could not force it open; and, in my tremor, it slipped from my hands, and fell heavily, and burst

into pieces; and from it, with a rattling sound, there rolled out some instruments of dental surgery, intermingled with thirty-two small, white, and ivory-looking substances that were scattered to and fro about the floor.

THE OVAL PORTRAIT

THE chateau into which my valet had ventured to make forcible entrance, rather than permit me, in my desperately wounded condition, to pass a night in the open air, was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Apennines, not less in fact than in the fancy of Mrs. Radcliffe. To all appearance it had been temporarily and very lately abandoned. We established ourselves in one of the smallest and least sumptuously furnished apartments. It lay in a remote turret of the building. Its decorations were rich, yet tattered and antique. Its walls were hung with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque. In these paintings, which depended from the walls not only in their main surfaces, but in very many nooks which the bizarre architecture of the chateau rendered necessary — in these paintings my incipient delirium, perhaps, had caused me to take deep interest; so that I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room — since it was already night, to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of my bed, and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtains of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep,

at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which had been found upon the pillow, and which purported to criticise and describe them.

Long — long I read — and devoutly, devotedly I gazed. Rapidly and gloriously the hours flew by, and the deep midnight came. The position of the candelabrum displeased me, and outreaching my hand with difficulty, rather than disturb my slumbering valet, I placed it so as to throw its rays more fully upon the book.

But the action produced an effect altogether unanticipated. The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche of the room which had hitherto been thrown into deep shade by one of the bedposts. I thus saw in vivid light a picture all unnoticed before. It was the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood. I glanced at the painting hurriedly, and then closed my eyes. Why I did this was not at first apparent even to my own perception. But while my lids remained thus shut, I ran over in mind my reason for so shutting them. It was an impulsive movement to gain time for thought — to make sure that my vision had not deceived me — to calm and subdue my fancy for a more sober and more certain gaze. In a very few moments I again looked fixedly at the painting.

That I now saw aright I could not and would not doubt; for the first flashing of the candles upon that canvas had seemed to dissipate the dreamy stupor which was stealing over my senses, and to startle me at once into waking life.

The portrait, I have already said, was that of a young girl. It was a mere head and shoulders, done

in what is technically termed a vignette manner; much in the style of the favorite heads of Sully. The arms, the bosom, and even the ends of the radiant hair, melted imperceptibly into the vague yet deep shadow which formed the background of the whole. The frame was oval, richly gilded and filagreed in Moresque. As a thing of art, nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself. But it could have been neither the execution of the work, nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me. Least of all, could it have been that my fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a living person. I saw at once that the peculiarities of the design, of the vignetting, and of the frame, must have instantly dispelled such idea — must have prevented even its momentary entertainment. Thinking earnestly upon these points, I remained, for an hour perhaps, half sitting, half reclining, with my vision riveted upon the portrait. At length, satisfied with the true secret of its effect, I fell back within the bed. I had found the spell of the picture in an absolute *life-likeliness* of expression, which, at first startling, finally confounded, subdued and appalled me. With deep and reverent awe I replaced the candelabrum in its former position. The cause of my deep agitation being thus shut from view, I sought eagerly the volume which discussed the paintings and their histories. Turning to the number which designated the oval portrait, I there read the vague and quaint words which follow: —

"She was a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee. And evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wedded the painter. He, passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his Art:

she a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee: all light and smiles, and frolicsome as the young fawn; loving and cherishing all things; hating only the Art which was her rival; dreading only the palette and brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover. It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire to portray even his young bride. But she was humble and obedient, and sat meekly for many weeks in the dark high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead. But he, the painter, took glory in his work, which went on from hour to hour, and from day to day. And he was a passionate, and wild, and moody man, who became lost in reveries; so that he *would* not see that the light which fell so ghastlily in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him. Yet she smiled on and still on, uncomplainingly, because she saw that the painter (who had high renown) took a fervid and burning pleasure in his task, and wrought day and night to depict her who so loved him, yet who grew daily more dispirited and weak. And in sooth some who beheld the portrait spoke of its resemblance in low words, as of a mighty marvel, and a proof not less of the power of the painter than of his deep love for her whom he depicted so surpassingly well. But at length, as the labor drew nearer to its conclusion, there were admitted none into the turret; for the painter had grown wild with the ardor of his work, and turned his eyes from the canvas rarely, even to regard the countenance of his wife. And he *would* not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sate beside him. And when many weeks had passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth and one tint upon the eye, the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp. And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and, for one moment,

the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed Life itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved: — *She was dead!*"

MORELLA

Αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ μεθ' αὑτοῦ, μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν.

Itself, by itself solely, ONE everlastingly, and single.

PLATO: *Symposium*, 211, B, XXIX.

WITH a feeling of deep yet most singular affection I regarded my friend Morella. Thrown by accident into her society many years ago, my soul, from our first meeting, burned with fires it had never before known; but the fires were not of Eros, and bitter and tormenting to my spirit was the gradual conviction that I could in no manner define their unusual meaning, or regulate their vague intensity. Yet we met; and fate bound us together at the altar; and I never spoke of passion, nor thought of love. She, however, shunned society, and, attaching herself to me alone, rendered me happy. It is a happiness to wonder; — it is a happiness to dream.

Morella's erudition was profound. As I hope to live, her talents were of no common order — her powers of mind were gigantic. I felt this, and, in many matters, became her pupil. I soon, however, found that, perhaps on account of her Presburg education, she placed before me a number of those mystical writings which are usually considered the mere dross of the early German literature. These, for what reason I could not imagine, were her

favorite and constant study — and that, in process of time they became my own, should be attributed to the simple but effectual influence of habit and example.

In all this, if I err not, my reason had little to do. My convictions, or I forget myself, were in no manner acted upon by the ideal, nor was any tincture of the mysticism which I read to be discovered, unless I am greatly mistaken, either in my deeds or in my thoughts. Persuaded of this, I abandoned myself implicitly to the guidance of my wife, and entered with an unflinching heart into the intricacies of her studies. And then — then, when, poring over forbidden pages, I felt a forbidden spirit enkindling within me — would Morella place her cold hand upon my own, and rake up from the ashes of a dead philosophy some low, singular words, whose strange meaning burned themselves in upon my memory. And then, hour after hour, would I linger by her side, and dwell upon the music of her voice — until, at length, its melody was tainted with terror, and there fell a shadow upon my soul, and I grew pale, and shuddered inwardly at those too unearthly tones. And thus joy suddenly faded into horror, and the most beautiful became the most hideous, as Hinnom became Gehenna.

It is unnecessary to state the exact character of those disquisitions which, growing out of the volumes I have mentioned, formed, for so long a time, almost the sole conversation of Morella and myself. By the learned in what might be termed theological morality they will be readily conceived, and by the unlearned they would, at all events, be little understood. The wild Pantheism of Fichte; the modified Παλιγγενεσία

of Pythagoreans; and, above all, the doctrines of Identity as urged by Schelling, were generally the points of discussion presenting the most of beauty to the imaginative Morella. That identity which is termed personal, Mr. Locke, I think, truly defines to consist in the sameness of a rational being. And since by person we understand an intelligent essence having reason, and since there is a consciousness which always accompanies thinking, it is this which makes us all to be that which we call *ourselves* — thereby distinguishing us from other beings that think, and giving us our personal identity. But the *principium individuationis* — the notion of that identity *which at death is or is not lost forever* — was to me, at all times, a consideration of intense interest; not more from the perplexing and exciting nature of its consequences, than from the marked and agitated manner in which Morella mentioned them.

But, indeed, the time had now arrived when the mystery of my wife's manner oppressed me as a spell. I could no longer bear the touch of her wan fingers, nor the low tone of her musical language, nor the lustre of her melancholy eyes. And she knew all this, but did not upbraid; she seemed conscious of my weakness or my folly, and, smiling, called it Fate. She seemed, also, conscious of a cause, to me unknown, for the gradual alienation of my regard; but she gave me no hint or token of its nature. Yet was she woman, and pined away daily. In time, the crimson spot settled steadily upon the cheek, and the blue veins upon the pale forehead became prominent; and, one instant, my nature melted into pity, but, in the next, I met the glance of her meaning eyes, and then my soul sickened and became giddy with the

giddiness of one who gazes downward into some dreary and unfathomable abyss.

Shall I then say that I longed with an earnest and consuming desire for the moment of Morella's decease? I did; but the fragile spirit clung to its tenement of clay for many days — for many weeks and irksome months — until my tortured nerves obtained the mastery over my mind, and I grew furious through delay, and with the heart of a fiend cursed the days, and the hours, and the bitter moments, which seemed to lengthen and lengthen as her gentle life declined — like shadows in the dying of the day.

But one autumnal evening, when the winds lay still in heaven, Morella called me to her bedside. There was a dim mist over all the earth, and a warm glow upon the waters, and, amid the rich October leaves of the forest, a rainbow from the firmament had surely fallen.

"It is a day of days," she said, as I approached; "a day of all days either to live or die. It is a fair day for the sons of earth and life — ah, more fair for the daughters of heaven and death!"

I kissed her forehead, and she continued: —

"I am dying, yet shall I live."

"Morella!"

"The days have never been when thou couldst love me — but her whom in life thou didst abhor, in death thou shalt adore."

"Morella!"

"I repeat that I am dying. But within me is a pledge of that affection — ah, how little! — which thou didst feel for me, Morella. And when my spirit departs shall the child live — thy child and mine, Morella's. But thy days shall be days of sorrow —

that sorrow which is the most lasting of impressions, as the cypress is the most enduring of trees. For the hours of thy happiness are over; and joy is not gathered twice in a life, as the roses of Pæstum twice in a year. Thou shalt no longer, then, play the Teian with time, but, being ignorant of the myrtle and the vine, thou shalt bear about with thee thy shroud on earth, as do the Moslemin at Mecca."

"Morella!" I cried, "Morella! how knowest thou this?" — but she turned away her face upon the pillow, and, a slight tremor coming over her limbs, she thus died, and I heard her voice no more.

Yet, as she had foretold, her child — to which in dying she had given birth, which breathed not until the mother breathed no more — her child, a daughter, lived. And she grew strangely in stature and intellect, and was the perfect resemblance of her who had departed, and I loved her with a love more fervent than I had believed it possible to feel for any denizen of earth.

But, ere long, the heaven of this pure affection became darkened, and gloom, and horror, and grief, swept over it in clouds. I said the child grew strangely in stature and intelligence. Strange, indeed, was her rapid increase in bodily size — but terrible, oh! terrible were the tumultuous thoughts which crowded upon me while watching the development of her mental being. Could it be otherwise, when I daily discovered in the conceptions of the child the adult powers and faculties of the woman? — when the lessons of experience fell from the lips of infancy? and when the wisdom or the passions of maturity I found hourly gleaming from its full and speculative eye? When, I say, all this became evident to my

appalled senses — when I could no longer hide it from my soul, nor throw it off from those perceptions which trembled to receive it — is it to be wondered at that suspicions, of a nature fearful and exciting, crept in upon my spirit, or that my thoughts fell back aghast upon the wild tales and thrilling theories of the entombed Morella? I snatched from the scrutiny of the world a being whom destiny compelled me to adore, and in the rigorous seclusion of my home watched with an agonizing anxiety over all which concerned the beloved.

And, as years rolled away, and I gazed, day after day, upon her holy, and mild, and eloquent face, and pored over her maturing form, day after day did I discover new points of resemblance in the child to her mother, the melancholy and the dead. And, hourly, grew darker these shadows of similitude, and more full, and more definite, and more perplexing, and more hideously terrible in their aspect. For that her smile was like her mother's I could bear, but then I shuddered at its too perfect *identity;* that her eyes were like Morella's I could endure, but then they too often looked down into the depths of my soul with Morella's own intense and bewildering meaning. And in the contour of the high forehead, and in the ringlets of the silken hair, and in the wan fingers which buried themselves therein, and in the sad musical tones of her speech, and above all — oh, above all — in the phrases and expressions of the dead on the lips of the loved and the living, I found food for consuming thought and horror — for a worm that *would* not die.

Thus passed away two lustra of her life, and, as yet, my daughter remained nameless upon the earth. "My child," and "my love," were the designations

usually prompted by a father's affection, and the rigid seclusion of her days precluded all other intercourse. Morella's name died with her at her death. Of the mother I had never spoken to the daughter, — it was impossible to speak. Indeed, during the brief period of her existence, the latter had received no impressions from the outward world, save such as might have been afforded by the narrow limits of her privacy. But at length the ceremony of baptism presented to my mind, in its unnerved and agitated condition, a present deliverance from the terrors of my destiny. And at the baptismal fount I hesitated for a name. And many titles of the wise and beautiful, of old and modern times, of my own and foreign lands, came thronging to my lips, with many, many fair titles of the gentle, and the happy, and the good. What prompted me, then, to disturb the memory of the buried dead? What demon urged me to breathe that sound, which in its very recollection was wont to make ebb the purple blood in torrents from the temples to the heart? What fiend spoke from the recesses of my soul, when, amid those dim aisles, and in the silence of the night, I whispered within the ears of the holy man the syllables — Morella? What more than fiend convulsed the features of my child, and overspread them with hues of death, as, starting at that scarcely audible sound, she turned her glassy eyes from the earth to heaven, and, falling prostrate on the black slabs of our ancestral vault, responded — "I am here!"

Distinct, coldly, calmly distinct, fell those few simple sounds within my ear, and thence, like molten lead, rolled hissingly into my brain. Years — years may pass away, but the memory of that epoch —

never! Nor was I indeed ignorant of the flowers and the vine — but the hemlock and the cypress overshadowed me night and day. And I kept no reckoning of time or place, and the stars of my fate faded from heaven, and therefore the earth grew dark, and its figures passed by me, like flitting shadows, and among them all I beheld only — Morella. The winds of the firmament breathed but one sound within my ears, and the ripples upon the sea murmured evermore — Morella. But she died; and with my own hands I bore her to the tomb; and I laughed with a long and bitter laugh as I found no traces of the first, in the charnel where I laid the second — Morella.

LIGEIA

And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will. JOSEPH GLANVILL.

I CANNOT, for my soul, remember how, when, or even precisely where, I first became acquainted with the lady Ligeia. Long years have since elapsed, and my memory is feeble through much suffering. Or, perhaps, I cannot *now* bring these points to mind, because in truth the character of my beloved, her rare learning, her singular yet placid cast of beauty, and the thrilling and enthralling eloquence of her low musical language, made their way into my heart by paces so steadily and stealthily progressive that they have been unnoticed and unknown. Yet I believe that I met her first and most frequently in some large, old, decaying city near the Rhine. Of her family I have surely heard her speak. That it is of a remotely ancient date cannot be doubted. Ligeia! Ligeia! Buried in studies of a nature more than all else adapted to deaden impressions of the outward world, it is by that sweet word alone — by Ligeia — that I bring before mine eyes in fancy the image of her who is no more. And now, while I write, a recollection

flashes upon me that I have *never known* the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom. Was it a playful charge on the part of my Ligeia? or was it a test of my strength of affection, that I should institute no inquiries upon this point? or was it rather a caprice of my own — a wildly romantic offering on the shrine of the most passionate devotion? I but indistinctly recall the fact itself — what wonder that I have utterly forgotten the circumstances which originated or attended it? And, indeed, if ever that spirit which is entitled *Romance* — if ever she, the wan and the misty-winged Ashtophet of idolatrous Egypt, presided, as they tell, over marriages ill-omened, then most surely she presided over mine.

There is one dear topic, however, on which my memory fails me not. It is the *person* of Ligeia. In stature she was tall, somewhat slender, and, in her latter days, even emaciated. I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease, of her demeanor, or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study, save by the dear music of her low sweet voice, as she placed her marble hand upon my shoulder. In beauty of face no maiden ever equalled her. It was the radiance of an opium-dream — an airy and spirit-lifting vision more wildly divine than the fantasies which hovered about the slumbering souls of the daughters of Delos. Yet her features were not of that regular mould which we have been falsely taught to worship in the classical labors of the heathen. "There is no exquisite beauty," says Bacon, Lord

Verulam, speaking truly of all the forms and genera of beauty, "without some *strangeness* in the proportion." Yet, although I saw that the features of Ligeia were not of a classic regularity — although I perceived that her loveliness was indeed "exquisite," and felt that there was much of "strangeness" pervading it, yet I have tried in vain to detect the irregularity and to trace home my own perception of "the strange." I examined the contour of the lofty and pale forehead: it was faultless — how cold indeed that word when applied to a majesty so divine! — the skin rivalling the purest ivory, the commanding extent and repose, the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples; and then the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant and naturally-curling tresses, setting forth the full force of the Homeric epithet, "hyacinthine!" I looked at the delicate outlines of the nose — and nowhere but in the graceful medallions of the Hebrews had I beheld a similar perfection. There were the same luxurious smoothness of surface, the same scarcely perceptible tendency to the aquiline, the same harmoniously curved nostrils speaking the free spirit. I regarded the sweet mouth. Here was indeed the triumph of all things heavenly — the magnificent turn of the short upper lip — the soft, voluptuous slumber of the under — the dimples which sported, and the color which spoke — the teeth glancing back, with a brilliancy almost startling, every ray of the holy light which fell upon them in her serene and placid, yet most exultingly radiant of all smiles. I scrutinized the formation of the chin: and here, too, I found the gentleness of breadth, the softness and the majesty, the fulness and the spirituality, of the Greek — the contour which the god Apollo revealed but in a

dream to Cleomenes, the son of the Athenian. And then I peered into the large eyes of Ligeia.

For eyes we have no models in the remotely antique. It might have been, too, that in these eyes of my beloved lay the secret to which Lord Verulam alludes. They were, I must believe, far larger than the ordinary eyes of our own race. They were even fuller than the fullest of the gazelle eyes of the tribe of the valley of Nourjahad. Yet it was only at intervals — in moments of intense excitement — that this peculiarity became more than slightly noticeable in Ligeia. And at such moments was her beauty — in my heated fancy thus it appeared perhaps — the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth, the beauty of the fabulous Houri of the Turk. The hue of the orbs was the most brilliant of black, and, far over them, hung jetty lashes of great length. The brows, slightly irregular in outline, had the same tint. The "strangeness," however, which I found in the eyes, was of a nature distinct from the formation, or the color, or the brilliancy of the features, and must, after all, be referred to the *expression*. Ah, word of no meaning! behind whose vast latitude of mere sound we intrench our ignorance of so much of the spiritual. The expression of the eyes of Ligeia! How for long hours have I pondered upon it! How have I, through the whole of a midsummer night, struggled to fathom it! What was it — that something more profound than the well of Democritus — which lay far within the pupils of my beloved? What *was* it? I was possessed with a passion to discover. Those eyes! those large, those shining, those divine orbs! they became to me twin stars of Leda, and I to them devoutest of astrologers.

There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact — never, I believe, noticed in the schools — that in our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember. And thus how frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia's eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression — felt it approaching, yet not quite be mine, and so at length entirely depart! And (strange, oh strangest mystery of all!) I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression. I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shrine, I derived, from many existences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always around, within me, by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, or analyze, or even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the survey of a rapidly-growing vine — in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean; in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven, (one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star in Lyra,) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not unfrequently by passages from books. Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanvill, which (perhaps merely from its quaint-

ness — who shall say?) never failed to inspire me with the sentiment: "And the will therein lieth, which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will."

Length of years and subsequent reflection have enabled me to trace, indeed, some remote connection between this passage in the English moralist and a portion of the character of Ligeia. An *intensity* in thought, action, or speech, was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes which at once so delighted and appalled me — by the almost magical melody, modulation, distinctness, and placidity of her very low voice — and by the fierce energy (rendered doubly effective by contrast with her manner of utterance) of the wild words which she habitually uttered.

I have spoken of the learning of Ligeia: it was immense — such as I have never known in woman. In the classical tongues was she deeply proficient, and as far as my own acquaintance extended in regard to the modern dialects of Europe, I have never known her at fault. Indeed upon any theme of the most admired, because simply the most abstruse of the boasted erudition of the academy, have I *ever* found Ligeia at fault? How singularly, how thrillingly, this

one point in the nature of my wife has forced itself, at this late period only, upon my attention! I said her knowledge was such as I have never known in woman — but where breathes the man who has traversed, and successfully, *all* the wide areas of moral, physical, and mathematical science? I saw not then what I now clearly perceive, that the acquisitions of Ligeia were gigantic, were astounding; yet I was sufficiently aware of her infinite supremacy to resign myself, with a child-like confidence, to her guidance through the chaotic world of metaphysical investigation at which I was most busily occupied during the earlier years of our marriage. With how vast a triumph, with how vivid a delight, with how much of all that is ethereal in hope, did I *feel*, as she bent over me in studies but little sought — but less known, that delicious vista by slow degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path, I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden!

How poignant, then, must have been the grief with which, after some years, I beheld my well-grounded expectations take wings to themselves and fly away! Without Ligeia I was but as a child groping benighted. Her presence, her readings alone, rendered vividly luminous the many mysteries of the transcendentalism in which we were immersed. Wanting the radiant lustre of her eyes, letters, lambent and golden, grew duller than Saturnian lead. And now those eyes shone less and less frequently upon the pages over which I pored. Ligeia grew ill. The wild eyes blazed with a too — too glorious effulgence; the pale fingers became of the transparent waxen hue of the

LIGEIA

grave; and the blue veins upon the lofty forehead swelled and sank impetuously with the tides of the most gentle emotion. I saw that she must die — and I struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael. And the struggles of the passionate wife were, to my astonishment, even more energetic than my own. There had been much in her stern nature to impress me with the belief that, to her, death would have come without its terrors; but not so. Words are impotent to convey any just idea of the fierceness of resistance with which she wrestled with the Shadow. I groaned in anguish at the pitiable spectacle. I would have soothed — I would have reasoned; but, in the intensity of her wild desire for life — for life — *but* for life — solace and reason were alike the uttermost of folly. Yet not until the last instance, amid the most convulsive writhings of her fierce spirit, was shaken the external placidity of her demeanor. Her voice grew more gentle — grew more low — yet I would not wish to dwell upon the wild meaning of the quietly uttered words. My brain reeled as I hearkened, entranced, to a melody more than mortal — to assumptions and aspirations which mortality had never before known.

That she loved me I should not have doubted; and I might have been easily aware that, in a bosom such as hers, love would have reigned no ordinary passion. But in death only was I fully impressed with the strength of her affection. For long hours, detaining my hand, would she pour out before me the overflowing of a heart whose more than passionate devotion amounted to idolatry. How had I deserved to be so blessed by such confessions? how had I deserved to be so cursed with the removal of my

beloved in the hour of her making them? But upon this subject I cannot bear to dilate. Let me say only, that in Ligeia's more than womanly abandonment to a love, alas! all unmerited, all unworthily bestowed, I at length recognized the principle of her longing, with so wildly earnest a desire, for the life which was now fleeing so rapidly away. It is this wild longing, it is this eager vehemence of desire for life — *but* for life, that I have no power to portray, no utterance capable of expressing.

At high noon of the night in which she departed, beckoning me peremptorily to her side, she bade me repeat certain verses composed by herself not many days before. I obeyed her. They were these:

Lo! 'tis a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years.
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly;
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their condor wings
Invisible Woe.

That motley drama — oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,

Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot;
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude:
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes — it writhes! with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out — out are the lights — out all!
And over each quivering form
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

"O God!" half shrieked Ligeia, leaping to her feet and extending her arms aloft with a spasmodic movement, as I made an end of these lines — "O God! O Divine Father! shall these things be undeviatingly so? shall this conqueror be not once conquered? Are we not part and parcel in Thee? Who — who knoweth the mysteries of the will with its vigor? 'Man doth not yield him to the angels, *nor unto death utterly*, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.'"

And now, as if exhausted with emotion, she suffered her white arms to fall, and returned solemnly to her bed of death. And as she breathed her last sighs, there came mingled with them a low murmur from her

lips. I bent to them my ear, and distinguished, again, the concluding words of the passage in Glanvill: "*Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*"

She died: and I, crushed into the very dust with sorrow, could no longer endure the lonely desolation of my dwelling in the dim and decaying city by the Rhine. I had no lack of what the world calls wealth. Ligeia had brought me far more, very far more, than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals. After a few months, therefore, of weary and aimless wandering, I purchased, and put in some repair, an abbey, which I shall not name, in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England. The gloomy and dreary grandeur of the building, the almost savage aspect of the domain, the many melancholy and time-honored memories connected with both, had much in unison with the feelings of utter abandonment which had driven me into that remote and unsocial region of the country. Yet although the external abbey, with its verdant decay hanging about it, suffered but little alteration, I gave way with a child-like perversity, and perchance with a faint hope of alleviating my sorrows, to a display of more than regal magnificence within. For such follies, even in childhood, I had imbibed a taste, and now they came back to me as if in the dotage of grief. Alas, I feel how much even of incipient madness might have been discovered in the gorgeous and fantastic draperies, in the solemn carvings of Egypt, in the wild cornices and furniture, in the Bedlam patterns of the carpets of tufted gold! I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labors and my orders had taken a coloring

from my dreams. But these absurdities I must not pause to detail. Let me speak only of that one chamber ever accursed, whither, in a moment of mental alienation, I led from the altar as my bride — as the successor of the unforgotten Ligeia — the fair-haired and blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine.

There is no individual portion of the architecture and decoration of that bridal chamber which is not now visibly before me. Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment *so* bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved? I have said that I minutely remember the details of the chamber — yet I am sadly forgetful on topics of deep moment; and here there was no system, no keeping, in the fantastic display, to take hold upon the memory. The room lay in a high turret of the castellated abbey, was pentagonal in shape, and of capacious size. Occupying the whole southern face of the pentagon was the sole window — an immense sheet of unbroken glass from Venice — a single pane, and tinted of a leaden hue, so that the rays of either the sun or moon, passing through it, fell with a ghastly lustre on the objects within. Over the upper portion of this huge window extended the trellis-work of an aged vine, which clambered up the massy walls of the turret. The ceiling, of gloomy-looking oak, was excessively lofty, vaulted, and elaborately fretted with the wildest and most grotesque specimens of a semi-Gothic, semi-Druidical device. From out the most central recess of this melancholy vaulting depended, by a single chain of gold with long links, a huge censer of the same metal, Saracenic in pattern, and with many perforations so contrived that there writhed

in and out of them, as if endued with a serpent vitality, a continual succession of party-colored fires.

Some few ottomans and golden candelabra, of Eastern figure, were in various stations about; and there was the couch, too — the bridal couch — of an Indian model, and low, and sculptured of solid ebony, with a pall-like canopy above. In each of the angles of the chamber stood on end a gigantic sarcophagus of black granite, from the tombs of the kings over against Luxor, with their aged lids full of immemorial sculpture. But in the draping of the apartment lay, alas! the chief fantasy of all. The lofty walls, gigantic in height, even unproportionably so, were hung from summit to foot, in vast folds, with a heavy and massive-looking tapestry — tapestry of a material which was found alike as a carpet on the floor, as a covering for the ottomans and the ebony bed, as a canopy for the bed, and as the gorgeous volutes of the curtains which partially shaded the window. The material was the richest cloth of gold. It was spotted all over, at irregular intervals, with arabesque figures, about a foot in diameter, and wrought upon the cloth in patterns of the most jetty black. But these figures partook of the true character of the arabesque only when regarded from a single point of view. By a contrivance now common, and indeed traceable to a very remote period of antiquity, they were made changeable in aspect. To one entering the room, they bore the appearance of simple monstrosities; but upon a farther advance, this appearance gradually departed; and, step by step, as the visitor moved his station in the chamber, he saw himself surrounded by an endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty

slumbers of the monk. The phantasmagoric effect was vastly heightened by the artificial introduction of a strong continual current of wind behind the draperies, giving a hideous and uneasy animation to the whole.

In halls such as these, in a bridal chamber such as this, I passed, with the Lady of Tremaine, the unhallowed hours of the first month of our marriage — passed them with but little disquietude. That my wife dreaded the fierce moodiness of my temper — that she shunned me, and loved me but little — I could not help perceiving; but it gave me rather pleasure than otherwise. I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man. My memory flew back (oh, with what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the august, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollections of her purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty, her ethereal nature, of her passionate, her idolatrous love. Now, then, did my spirit fully and freely burn with more than all the fires of her own. In the excitement of my opium dreams, (for I was habitually fettered in the shackles of the drug,) I would call aloud upon her name, during the silence of the night, or among the sheltered recesses of the glens by day, as if, through the wild eagerness, the solemn passion, the consuming ardor of my longing for the departed, I could restore her to the pathway she had abandoned — ah, *could* it be forever? — upon the earth.

About the commencement of the second month of the marriage, the Lady Rowena was attacked with sudden illness, from which her recovery was slow. The fever which consumed her, rendered her nights uneasy; and in her perturbed state of half-slumber, she spoke of sounds, and of motions, in and about the

chamber of the turret, which I concluded had no origin save in the distemper of her fancy, or perhaps in the phantasmagoric influences of the chamber itself. She became at length convalescent — finally, well. Yet but a brief period elapsed, ere a second more violent disorder again threw her upon a bed of suffering; and from this attack her frame, at all times feeble, never altogether recovered. Her illnesses were, after this epoch, of alarming character, and of more alarming recurrence, defying alike the knowledge and the great exertions of her physicians. With the increase of the chronic disease, which had thus apparently taken too sure hold upon her constitution to be eradicated by human means, I could not fail to observe a similar increase in the nervous irritation of her temperament, and in her excitability by trivial causes of fear. She spoke again, and now more frequently and pertinaciously, of the sounds — of the slight sounds — and of the unusual motions among the tapestries, to which she had formerly alluded.

One night, near the closing in of September, she pressed this distressing subject with more than usual emphasis upon my attention. She had just awakened from an unquiet slumber, and I had been watching, with feelings half of anxiety, half of vague terror, the workings of her emaciated countenance. I sat by the side of her ebony bed, upon one of the ottomans of India. She partly arose, and spoke, in an earnest low whisper, of sounds which she *then* heard, but which I could not hear — of motions which she *then* saw, but which I could not perceive. The wind was rushing hurriedly behind the tapestries, and I wished to show her (what, let me confess it, I could not *all* believe) that those almost inarticulate breathings, and

those very gentle variations of the figures upon the wall, were but the natural effects of that customary rushing of the wind. But a deadly pallor, overspreading her face, had proved to me that my exertions to reassure her would be fruitless. She appeared to be fainting, and no attendants were within call. I remembered where was deposited a decanter of light wine which had been ordered by her physicians, and hastened across the chamber to procure it. But, as I stepped beneath the light of the censer, two circumstances of a startling nature attracted my attention. I had felt that some palpable although invisible object had passed lightly by my person; and I saw that there lay upon the golden carpet, in the very middle of the rich lustre thrown from the censer, a shadow — a faint, indefinite shadow of angelic aspect — such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade. But I was wild with the excitement of an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena. Having found the wine, I recrossed the chamber, and poured out a gobletful, which I held to the lips of the fainting lady. She had now partially recovered, however, and took the vessel herself, while I sank upon an ottoman near me, with my eyes fastened upon her person. It was then that I became distinctly aware of a gentle footfall upon the carpet, and near the couch; and in a second thereafter, as Rowena was in the act of raising the wine to her lips, I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby-colored fluid. If this I saw — not so Rowena. She swallowed the wine unhesitatingly, and I forbore to speak to her of

a circumstance which must after all, I considered, have been but the suggestion of a vivid imagination, rendered morbidly active by the terror of the lady, by the opium, and by the hour.

Yet I cannot conceal it from my own perception that, immediately subsequent to the fall of the ruby-drops, a rapid change for the worst took place in the disorder of my wife; so that, on the third subsequent night, the hands of her menials prepared her for the tomb, and on the fourth, I sat alone, with her shrouded body, in that fantastic chamber which had received her as my bride. Wild visions, opium-engendered, flitted shadow-like before me. I gazed with unquiet eye upon the sarcophagi in the angles of the room, upon the varying figures of the drapery, and upon the writhing of the party-colored fires in the censer overhead. My eyes then fell, as I called to mind the circumstances of a former night, to the spot beneath the glare of the censer where I had seen the faint traces of the shadow. It was there, however, no longer; and breathing with greater freedom, I turned my glances to the pallid and rigid figure upon the bed. Then rushed upon me a thousand memories of Ligeia — and then came back upon my heart, with the turbulent violence of a flood, the whole of that unutterable woe with which I had regarded *her* thus enshrouded. The night waned; and still, with a bosom full of bitter thoughts of the one only and supremely beloved, I remained gazing upon the body of Rowena.

It might have been midnight, or perhaps earlier, or later, for I had taken no note of time, when a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct, startled me from my revery. I *felt* that it came from the bed of ebony —

the bed of death. I listened in an agony of superstitious terror — but there was no repetition of the sound. I strained my vision to detect any motion in the corpse — but there was not the slightest perceptible. Yet I could not have been deceived. I *had* heard the noise, however faint, and my soul was awakened within me. I resolutely and perseveringly kept my attention riveted upon the body. Many minutes elapsed before any circumstance occurred tending to throw light upon the mystery. At length it became evident that a slight, a very feeble, and barely noticeable tinge of color had flushed up within the cheeks, and along the sunken small veins of the eyelids. Through a species of unutterable horror and awe, for which the language of mortality has no sufficiently energetic expression, I felt my heart cease to beat, my limbs grow rigid where I sat. Yet a sense of duty finally operated to restore my self-possession. I could no longer doubt that we had been precipitate in our preparations — that Rowena still lived. It was necessary that some immediate exertion be made; yet the turret was altogether apart from the portion of the abbey tenanted by the servants — there were none within call — I had no means of summoning them to my aid without leaving the room for many minutes — and this I could not venture to do. I therefore struggled alone in my endeavors to call back the spirit still hovering. In a short period it was certain, however, that a relapse had taken place; the color disappeared from both eyelid and cheek, leaving a wanness even more than that of marble; the lips became doubly shrivelled and pinched up in the ghastly expression of death; a repulsive clamminess and coldness overspread rapidly the surface of the body; and all the usual rigorous

stiffness immediately supervened. I fell back with a shudder upon the couch from which I had been so startlingly aroused, and again gave myself up to passionate waking visions of Ligeia.

An hour thus elapsed, when (could it be possible?) I was a second time aware of some vague sound issuing from the region of the bed. I listened — in extremity of horror. The sound came again — it was a sigh. Rushing to the corpse, I saw — distinctly saw — a tremor upon the lips. In a minute afterwards they relaxed, disclosing a bright line of the pearly teeth. Amazement now struggled in my bosom with the profound awe which had hitherto reigned there alone. I felt that my vision grew dim, that my reason wandered; and it was only by a violent effort that I at length succeeded in nerving myself to the task which duty thus once more had pointed out. There was now a partial glow upon the forehead and upon the cheek and throat; a perceptible warmth pervaded the whole frame; there was even a slight pulsation at the heart. The lady *lived;* and with redoubled ardor I betook myself to the task of restoration. I chafed and bathed the temples and the hands, and used every exertion which experience, and no little medical reading, could suggest. But in vain. Suddenly, the color fled, the pulsation ceased, the lips resumed the expression of the dead, and, in an instant afterward, the whole body took upon itself the icy chilliness, the livid hue, the intense rigidity, the sunken outline, and all the loathsome peculiarities of that which has been, for many days, a tenant of the tomb.

And again I sunk into visions of Ligeia — and again, (what marvel that I shudder while I write?) *again* there reached my ears a low sob from the

region of the ebony bed. But why shall I minutely detail the unspeakable horrors of that night? Why shall I pause to relate how, time after time, until near the period of the gray dawn, this hideous drama of revivification was repeated; how each terrific relapse was only into a sterner and apparently more irredeemable death; how each agony wore the aspect of a struggle with some invisible foe; and how each struggle was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse? Let me hurry to a conclusion.

The greater part of the fearful night had worn away, and she who had been dead, once again stirred — and now more vigorously than hitherto, although arousing from a dissolution more appalling in its utter helplessness than any. I had long ceased to struggle or to move, and remained sitting rigidly upon the ottoman, a helpless prey to a whirl of violent emotions, of which extreme awe was perhaps the least terrible, the least consuming. The corpse, I repeat, stirred, and now more vigorously than before. The hues of life flushed up with unwonted energy into the countenance — the limbs relaxed — and, save that the eyelids were yet pressed heavily together, and that the bandages and draperies of the grave still imparted their charnel character to the figure, I might have dreamed that Rowena had indeed shaken off, utterly, the fetters of Death. But if this idea was not, even then, altogether adopted, I could at least doubt no longer, when, arising from the bed, tottering, with feeble steps, with closed eyes, and with the manner of one bewildered in a dream, the thing that was enshrouded advanced bodily and palpably into the middle of the apartment.

I trembled not — I stirred not — for a crowd of unutterable fancies connected with the air, the stature, the demeanor of the figure, rushing hurriedly through my brain, had paralyzed — had chilled me into stone. I stirred not — but gazed upon the apparition. There was a mad disorder in my thoughts — a tumult unappeasable. Could it, indeed, be the *living* Rowena who confronted me? Could it indeed be Rowena *at all* — the fair-haired, the blue-eyed Lady Rowena Trevanion of Tremaine? Why, *why* should I doubt it? The bandage lay heavily about the mouth — but then might it not be the mouth of the breathing Lady of Tremaine? And the cheeks — there were the roses as in her noon of life — yes, these might indeed be the fair cheeks of the living Lady of Tremaine. And the chin, with its dimples, as in health, might it not be hers? but *had she then grown taller since her malady?* What inexpressible madness seized me with that thought? One bound, and I had reached her feet! Shrinking from my touch, she let fall from her head the ghastly cerements which had confined it, and there streamed forth, into the rushing atmosphere of the chamber, huge masses of long and dishevelled hair; *it was blacker than the wings of the midnight!* And now slowly opened *the eyes* of the figure which stood before me. "Here then, at least," I shrieked aloud, "can I never — can I never be mistaken — these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes — of my lost love — of the Lady — of the LADY LIGEIA."

ELEONORA

Sub conservatione formæ specificæ salva anima.

RAYMOND LULLY.

I AM come of a race noted for vigor of fancy and ardor of passion. Men have called me mad; but the question is not yet settled, whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence: whether much that is glorious, whether all that is profound, does not spring from disease of thought — from *moods* of mind exalted at the expense of the general intellect. They who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night. In their gray visions they obtain glimpses of eternity, and thrill, in awaking, to find that they have been upon the verge of the great secret. In snatches, they learn something of the wisdom which is of good, and more of the mere knowledge which is of evil. They penetrate, however rudderless or compassless, into the vast ocean of the "light ineffable;" and again, like the adventures of the Nubian geographer, "*agressi sunt mare tenebrarum, quid in eo esset exploraturi.*"

We will say, then, that I am mad. I grant, at least, that there are two distinct conditions of my mental existence: the condition of a lucid reason, not to be disputed, and belonging to the memory of events forming the first epoch of my life — and a condition

of shadow and doubt, appertaining to the present, and to the recollection of what constitutes the second great era of my being. Therefore, what I shall tell of the earlier period, believe; and to what I may relate of the later time, give only such credit as may seem due; or doubt it altogether; or, if doubt it ye cannot, then play unto its riddle the Œdipus.

She whom I loved in youth, and of whom I now pen calmly and distinctly these remembrances, was the sole daughter of the only sister of my mother long departed. Eleonora was the name of my cousin. We had always dwelled together, beneath a tropical sun, in the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass. No unguided footstep ever came upon that vale; for it lay far away up among a range of giant hills that hung beetling around about it, shutting out the sunlight from its sweetest recesses. No path was trodden in its vicinity; and, to reach our happy home, there was need of putting back, with force, the foliage of many thousands of forest trees, and of crushing to death the glories of many millions of fragrant flowers. Thus it was that we lived all alone, knowing nothing of the world without the valley, — I, and my cousin, and her mother.

From the dim regions beyond the mountains at the upper end of our encircled domain, there crept out a narrow and deep river, brighter than all save the eyes of Eleonora; and, winding stealthily about in mazy courses, it passed away, at length, through a shadowy gorge, among hills still dimmer than those whence it had issued. We called it the "River of Silence;" for there seemed to be a hushing influence in its flow. No murmur arose from its bed, and so gently it wandered along, that the pearly pebbles upon which

we loved to gaze, far down within its bosom, stirred not at all, but lay in a motionless content, each in its own old station, shining on gloriously forever.

The margin of the river, and of the many dazzling rivulets that glided through devious ways into its channel, as well as the spaces that extended from the margins away down into the depths of the streams until they reached the bed of pebbles at the bottom, — these spots, not less than the whole surface of the valley, from the river to the mountains that girdled it in, were carpeted all by a soft green grass, thick, short, perfectly even, and vanilla-perfumed, but so besprinkled throughout with the yellow buttercup, the white daisy, the purple violet, and the ruby-red asphodel, that its exceeding beauty spoke to our hearts in loud tones of the love and of the glory of God.

And, here and there, in groves about this grass, like wildernesses of dreams, sprang up fantastic trees, whose tall slender stems stood not upright, but slanted gracefully towards the light that peered at noonday into the centre of the valley. Their bark was speckled with the vivid alternate splendor of ebony and silver, and was smoother than all save the cheeks of Eleonora; so that, but for the brilliant green of the huge leaves that spread from their summits in long, tremulous lines, dallying with the Zephyrs, one might have fancied them giant serpents of Syria doing homage to their Sovereign the Sun.

Hand in hand about this valley, for fifteen years, roamed I with Eleonora before Love entered within our hearts. It was one evening at the close of the third lustrum of her life, and of the fourth of my own, that we sat, locked in each other's embrace, beneath the serpent-like trees, and looked down within the

waters of the River of Silence at our images therein. We spoke no words during the rest of that sweet day; and our words even upon the morrow were tremulous and few. We had drawn the god Eros from that wave, and now we felt that he had enkindled within us the fiery souls of our forefathers. The passions which had for centuries distinguished our race came thronging with the fancies for which they had been equally noted, and together breathed a delirious bliss over the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass. A change fell upon all things. Strange, brilliant flowers, star-shaped, burst out upon the trees where no flowers had been known before. The tints of the green carpet deepened; and when, one by one, the white daisies shrank away, there sprang up in place of them ten by ten of the ruby-red asphodel. And life arose in our paths; for the tall flamingo, hitherto unseen, with all gay glowing birds, flaunted his scarlet plumage before us. The golden and silver fish haunted the river, out of the bosom of which issued, little by little, a murmur that swelled, at length, into a lulling melody more divine than that of the harp of Æolus — sweeter than all save the voice of Eleonora. And now, too, a voluminous cloud, which we had long watched in the regions of Hesper, floated out thence, all gorgeous in crimson and gold, and settling in peace above us, sank, day by day, lower and lower, until its edges rested upon the tops of the mountains, turning all their dimness into magnificence, and shutting us up, as if forever, within a magic prison-house of grandeur and of glory.

The loveliness of Eleonora was that of the Seraphim; but she was a maiden artless and innocent as the brief life she had led among the flowers. No guile dis-

ELEONORA

guised the fervor of love which animated her heart, and she examined with me its inmost recesses as we walked together in the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass, and discoursed of the mighty changes which had lately taken place therein.

At length, having spoken one day, in tears, of the last sad change which must befall Humanity, she thenceforward dwelt only upon this one sorrowful theme, interweaving it into all our converse, as, in the songs of the bard of Schiraz, the same images are found occurring, again and again, in every impressive variation of phrase.

She had seen that the finger of Death was upon her bosom — that, like the ephemeron, she had been made perfect in loveliness only to die; but the terrors of the grave to her lay solely in a consideration which she revealed to me, one evening at twilight, by the banks of the River of Silence. She grieved to think that, having entombed her in the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass, I would quit forever its happy recesses, transferring the love which now was so passionately her own to some maiden of the outer and every-day world. And then and there I threw myself hurriedly at the feet of Eleonora, and offered up a vow, to herself and to Heaven, that I would never bind myself in marriage to any daughter of Earth — that I would in no manner prove recreant to her dear memory, or to the memory of the devout affection with which she had blessed me. And I called the Mighty Ruler of the Universe to witness the pious solemnity of my vow. And the curse which I invoked of Him and of her, a saint in Helusion, should I prove traitorous to that promise, involved a penalty the exceeding great horror of which will not permit me to make record of

it here. And the bright eyes of Eleonora grew brighter at my words; and she sighed as if a deadly burden had been taken from her breast; and she trembled and very bitterly wept; but she made acceptance of the vow, (for what was she but a child?) and it made easy to her the bed of her death. And she said to me not many days afterwards, tranquilly dying, that, because of what I had done for the comfort of her spirit, she would watch over me in that spirit when departed, and, if so it were permitted her, return to me visibly in the watches of the night; but, if this thing were indeed beyond the power of the souls in Paradise, that she would at least give me frequent indications of her presence; sighing upon me in the evening winds, or filling the air which I breathed with perfume from the censers of the angels. And, with these words upon her lips, she yielded up her innocent life, putting an end to the first epoch of my own.

Thus far I have faithfully said. But as I pass the barrier in Time's path, formed by the death of my beloved, and proceed with the second era of my existence, I feel that a shadow gathers over my brain, and I mistrust the perfect sanity of the record. But let me on. — Years dragged themselves along heavily, and still I dwelled within the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass; but a second change had come upon all things. The star-shaped flowers shrank into the stems of the trees, and appeared no more. The tints of the green carpet faded; and one by one the ruby-red asphodels withered away; and there sprang up in place of them, ten by ten, dark eye-like violets, that writhed uneasily and were ever encumbered with dew. And Life departed from our paths; for the tall flamingo flaunted no longer his scarlet plumage before us, but flew sadly

from the vale into the hills, with all the gay glowing birds that had arrived in his company. And the golden and silver fish swam down through the gorge at the lower end of our domain and bedecked the sweet river never again. And the lulling melody that had been softer than the wind-harp of Æolus, and more divine than all save the voice of Eleonora, it died little by little away, in murmurs growing lower and lower, until the stream returned, at length, utterly, into the solemnity of its original silence. And then, lastly, the voluminous cloud uprose, and, abandoning the tops of the mountains to the dimness of old, fell back into the regions of Hesper, and took away all its manifold golden and gorgeous glories from the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass.

Yet the promises of Eleonora were not forgotten; for I heard the sounds of the swinging of the censers of the angels; and streams of a holy perfume floated ever and ever about the valley; and at lone hours, when my heart beat heavily, the winds that bathed my brow came unto me laden with soft sighs; and indistinct murmurs filled often the night air; and once — oh, but once only! I was awakened from a slumber, like the slumber of death, by the pressing of spiritual lips upon my own.

But the void within my heart refused, even thus, to be filled. I longed for the love which had before filled it to overflowing. At length the valley *pained* me through its memories of Eleonora, and I left it forever for the vanities and the turbulent triumphs of the world.

. . . . . .

I found myself within a strange city, where all things might have served to blot from recollection the sweet

dreams I had dreamed so long in the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass. The pomps and pageantries of a stately court, and the mad clangor of arms, and the radiant loveliness of woman, bewildered and intoxicated my brain. But as yet my soul had proved true to its vows, and the indications of the presence of Eleonora were still given me in the silent hours of the night. Suddenly, these manifestations — they ceased; and the world grew dark before mine eyes; and I stood aghast at the burning thoughts which possessed, at the terrible temptations which beset, me; for there came from some far, far distant and unknown land, into the gay court of the king I served, a maiden to whose beauty my whole recreant heart yielded at once — at whose footstool I bowed down without a struggle, in the most ardent, in the most abject worship of love. What indeed was my passion for the young girl of the valley in comparison with the fervor, and the delirium, and the spirit-lifting ecstasy of adoration with which I poured out my whole soul in tears at the feet of the ethereal Ermengarde? Oh, bright was the seraph Ermengarde! and in that knowledge I had room for none other. Oh, divine was the angel Ermengarde! and as I looked down into the depths of her memorial eyes, I thought only of them — and *of her*.

I wedded; — nor dreaded the curse I had invoked; and its bitterness was not visited upon me. And once — but once again in the silence of the night, there came through my lattice the soft sighs which had forsaken me; and they modelled themselves into familiar and sweet voice, saying: —

"Sleep in peace! — for the Spirit of Love reigneth and ruleth, and, in taking to thy passionate heart her who is Ermengarde, thou art absolved, for reasons which shall be made known to thee in Heaven, of thy vows unto Eleonora."

CELESTIAL

213

THE

COLLOQUY OF MONOS AND UNA

Μέλλοντα ταῦτα.
SOPHOCLES: *Antigone*, 1334.
These things are in the future.

UNA. "Born again?"

MONOS. Yes, fairest and best beloved Una, "born again." These were the words upon whose mystical meaning I had so long pondered, rejecting the explanations of the priesthood, until Death himself resolved for me the secret.

UNA. Death!

MONOS. How strangely, sweet Una, you echo my words! I observe, too, a vacillation in your step — a joyous inquietude in your eyes. You are confused and oppressed by the majestic novelty of the Life Eternal. Yes, it was of Death I spoke. And here how singularly sounds that word which of old was wont to bring terror to all hearts — throwing a mildew upon all pleasures!

UNA. Ah, Death, the spectre which sate at all feasts! How often, Monos, did we lose ourselves in speculations upon its nature! How mysteriously did it act as a check to human bliss — saying unto it "thus far, and no farther!" That earnest mutual love, my own Monos, which burned within our bosoms — how

vainly did we flatter ourselves, feeling happy in its first upspringing, that our happiness would strengthen with its strength! Alas, as it grew, so grew in our hearts the dread of that evil hour which was hurrying to separate us forever! Thus, in time, it became painful to love. Hate would have been mercy then.

MONOS. Speak not here of these griefs, dear Una — mine, mine forever now!

UNA. But the memory of past sorrow — is it not present joy? I have much to say yet of the things which have been. Above all, I burn to know the incidents of your own passage through the dark Valley and Shadow.

MONOS. And when did the radiant Una ask anything of her Monos in vain? I will be minute in relating all: but at what point shall the weird narrative begin?

UNA. At what point?

MONOS. You have said.

UNA. Monos, I comprehend you. In Death we have both learned the propensity of man to define the indefinable. I will not say, then, commence with the moment of life's cessation; but commence with that sad, sad instant when, the fever having abandoned you, you sank into a breathless and motionless torpor, and I pressed down your pallid eyelids with the passionate fingers of love.

MONOS. One word first, my Una, in regard to man's general condition at this epoch. You will remember that one or two of the wise among our forefathers — wise in fact, although not in the world's esteem — had ventured to doubt the propriety of the term "improvement," as applied to the progress of our civilization. There were periods in each of the five or

six centuries immediately preceding our dissolution when arose some vigorous intellect, boldly contending for those principles whose truth appears now, to our disenfranchised reason, so utterly obvious — principles which should have taught our race to submit to the guidance of the natural laws, rather than attempt their control. At long intervals some master-minds appeared, looking upon each advance in practical science as a retrogradation in the true utility. Occasionally the poetic intellect — that intellect which we now feel to have been the most exalted of all, since those truths which to us were of the most enduring importance could only be reached by that *analogy* which speaks in proof-tones to the imagination alone, and to the unaided reason bears no weight — occasionally did this poetic intellect proceed a step farther in the evolving of the vague idea of the philosophic, and find in the mystic parable that tells of the tree of knowledge, and of its forbidden fruit, death-producing, a distinct intimation that knowledge was not meet for man in the infant condition of his soul. And these men, the poets, living and perishing amid the scorn of the "utilitarians" — of rough pedants, who arrogated to themselves a title which could have been properly applied only to the scorned — these men, the poets, pondered piningly, yet not unwisely, upon the ancient days when our wants were not more simple than our enjoyments were keen; days when *mirth* was a word unknown, so solemnly deep-toned was happiness; holy, august and blissful days, when blue rivers ran undammed, between hills unhewn, into far forest solitudes, primeval, odorous, and unexplored.

Yet these noble exceptions from the general misrule

served but to strengthen it by opposition. Alas! we had fallen upon the most evil of all our evil days. The great "movement" — that was the cant term — went on: a diseased commotion, moral and physical. Art — the Arts — arose supreme, and, once enthroned, cast chains upon the intellect which had elevated them to power. Man, because he could not but acknowledge the majesty of Nature, fell into childish exultation at his acquired and still-increasing dominion over her elements. Even while he stalked a God in his own fancy, an infantine imbecility came over him. As might be supposed from the origin of his disorder, he grew infected with system, and with abstraction. He enwrapped himself in generalities. Among other odd ideas, that of universal equality gained ground; and in the face of analogy and of God, in despite of the loud warning voice of the laws of *gradation* so visibly pervading all things in Earth and Heaven, wild attempts at an omni-prevalent Democracy were made. Yet this evil sprang necessarily from the leading evil, Knowledge. Man could not both know and succumb. Meantime huge smoking cities arose, innumerable. Green leaves shrank before the hot breath of furnaces. The fair face of Nature was deformed as with the ravages of some loathsome disease. And methinks, sweet Una, even our slumbering sense of the forced and of the far-fetched might have arrested us here. But now it appears that we had worked out our own destruction in the perversion of our *taste*, or rather in the blind neglect of its culture in the schools. For, in truth, it was at this crisis that taste alone — that faculty which, holding a middle position between the pure intellect and the moral sense, could never safely have been disregarded — it was now that taste alone

could have led us gently back to Beauty, to Nature, and to Life. But alas for the pure contemplative spirit and majestic intuition of Plato! Alas for the μουσική which he justly regarded as an all-sufficient education for the soul! Alas for him and for it! — since both were most desperately needed when both were most entirely forgotten or despised.[1]

Pascal, a philosopher whom we both love, has said, how truly! — "*que tout notre raisonnement se réduit à céder au sentiment;*" and it is not impossible that the sentiment of the natural, had time permitted it, would have regained its old ascendency over the harsh mathematical reason of the schools. But this thing was not to be. Prematurely induced by intemperance of knowledge, the old age of the world drew on. This the mass of mankind saw not, or, living lustily although unhappily, affected not to see. But, for myself, the Earth's records had taught me to look for widest ruin

[1] "It will be hard to discover a better [method of education] than that which the experience of so many ages has already discovered; and this may be summed up as consisting in gymnastics for the body, and *music* for the soul." — Repub. lib. 2. "For this reason is a musical education most essential; since it causes Rhythm and Harmony to penetrate most intimately into the soul, taking the strongest hold upon it, filling it with *beauty*, and making the man *beautiful-minded*. . . . He will praise and admire *the beautiful;* will receive it with joy into his soul, will feed upon it, and *assimilate his own condition with it.*" — Ibid. lib. 3. Music (μουσική) had, however, among the Athenians a far more comprehensive signification than with us. It included not only the harmonies of time and of tune, but the poetic diction, sentiment and creation, each in its widest sense. The study of *music* was with them, in fact, the general cultivation of the taste — of that which recognizes the beautiful — in contradistinction from reason, which deals only with the true.

as the price of highest civilization. I had imbibed a prescience of our Fate from comparison of China, the simple and enduring, with Assyria the architect, with Egypt the astrologer, with Nubia, more crafty than either, the turbulent mother of all Arts. In history[1] of these regions I met with a ray from the Future. The individual artificialities of the three latter were local diseases of the Earth, and in their individual overthrows we had seen local remedies applied; but for the infected world at large I could anticipate no regeneration save in death. That man, as a race, should not become extinct, I saw that he must be "*born again.*"

And now it was, fairest and dearest, that we wrapped our spirits daily in dreams. Now it was that in twilight we discoursed of the days to come, when the Art-scarred surface of the Earth, having undergone that purification[2] which alone could efface its rectangular obscenities, should clothe itself anew in the verdure and the mountain-slopes and the smiling waters of Paradise, and be rendered at length a fit dwelling-place for man: for man the Death-purged; for man to whose now exalted intellect there should be poison in knowledge no more; for the redeemed, regenerated, blissful, and now immortal, but still for the *material*, man.

UNA. Well do I remember these conversations, dear Monos; but the epoch of the fiery overthrow was not so near at hand as we believed, and as the corruption you indicate did surely warrant us in believing. Men lived; and died individually. You

[1] "History," from ἱστορεῖν, to contemplate.

[2] The word "*purification*" seems here to be used with reference to its root in the Greek πῦρ, fire.

yourself sickened, and passed into the grave; and thither your constant Una speedily followed you. And though the century which has since elapsed, and whose conclusion brings us thus together once more, tortured our slumbering senses with no impatience of duration, yet, my Monos, it was a century still.

MONOS. Say, rather, a point in the vague infinity. Unquestionably, it was in the Earth's dotage that I died. Wearied at heart with anxieties which had their origin in the general turmoil and decay, I succumbed to the fierce fever. After some few days of pain, and many of dreamy delirium replete with ecstasy, the manifestations of which you mistook for pain, while I longed but was impotent to undeceive you — after some days there came upon me, as you have said, a breathless and motionless torpor; and this was termed *Death* by those who stood around me.

Words are vague things. My condition did not deprive me of sentience. It appeared to me not greatly dissimilar to the extreme quiescence of him, who, having slumbered long and profoundly, lying motionless and fully prostrate in a midsummer noon, begins to steal slowly back into consciousness, through the mere sufficiency of his sleep, and without being awakened by external disturbances.

I breathed no longer. The pulses were still. The heart had ceased to beat. Volition had not departed, but was powerless. The senses were unusually active, although eccentrically so — assuming often each other's functions at random. The taste and the smell were inextricably confounded, and became one sentiment, abnormal and intense. The rose-water with which your tenderness had moistened my lips to the last, affected

me with sweet fancies of flowers — fantastic flowers, far more lovely than any of the old Earth, but whose prototypes we have here blooming around us. The eyelids, transparent and bloodless, offered no complete impediment to vision. As volition was in abeyance, the balls could not roll in their sockets, but all objects within the range of the visual hemisphere were seen with more or less distinctness: the rays which fell upon the external retina, or into the corner of the eye, producing a more vivid effect than those which struck the front or interior surface. Yet, in the former instance, this effect was so far anomalous that I appreciated it only as *sound* — sound sweet or discordant as the matters presenting themselves at my side were light or dark in shade, curved or angular in outline. The hearing, at the same time, although excited in degree, was not irregular in action, estimating real sounds with an extravagance of precision not less than of sensibility. Touch had undergone a modification more peculiar. Its impressions were tardily received, but pertinaciously retained, and resulted always in the highest physical pleasure. Thus the pressure of your sweet fingers upon my eyelids, at first only recognized through vision, at length, long after their removal, filled my whole being with a sensual delight immeasurable. I say with a sensual delight. *All* my perceptions were purely sensual. The materials furnished the passive brain by the senses were not in the least degree wrought into shape by the deceased understanding. Of pain there was some little; of pleasure there was much; but of moral pain or pleasure none at all. Thus your wild sobs floated into my ear with all their mournful cadences, and were appreciated in their every variation of sad tone; but they were soft musi-

cal sounds and no more; they conveyed to the extinct reason no intimation of the sorrows which gave them birth; while the large and constant tears which fell upon my face, telling the bystanders of a heart which broke, thrilled every fibre of my frame with ecstasy alone. And this was in truth the *Death* of which these bystanders spoke reverently, in low whispers — you, sweet Una, gaspingly, with loud cries.

They attired me for the coffin — three or four dark figures which flitted busily to and fro. As these crossed the direct line of my vision they affected me as *forms;* but upon passing to my side their images impressed me with the idea of shrieks, groans, and other dismal expressions of terror, of horror, or of woe. You alone, habited in a white robe, passed in all directions musically about me.

The day waned; and, as its light faded away, I became possessed by a vague uneasiness, an anxiety such as the sleeper feels when sad real sounds fall continuously within his ear — low distant bell-tones, solemn, at long but equal intervals, and commingling with melancholy dreams. Night arrived; and with its shadows a heavy discomfort. It oppressed my limbs with the oppression of some dull weight, and was palpable. There was also a moaning sound, not unlike the distant reverberation of surf, but more continuous, which, beginning with the first twilight, had grown in strength with the darkness. Suddenly lights were brought into the room, and this reverberation became forthwith interrupted into frequent unequal bursts of the same sound, but less dreary and less distinct. The ponderous oppression was in a great measure relieved; and, issuing from the flame of each lamp, for there were many,) there flowed unbrokenly into

my ears a strain of melodious monotone. And when now, dear Una, approaching the bed upon which I lay outstretched, you sat gently by my side, breathing odor from your sweet lips, and pressing them upon my brow, there arose tremulously within my bosom, and mingling with the merely physical sensations which circumstances had called forth, a something akin to sentiment itself — a feeling that, half appreciating, half responded to your earnest love and sorrow; but this feeling took no root in the pulseless heart, and seemed indeed rather a shadow than a reality, and faded quickly away, first into extreme quiescence, and then into a purely sensual pleasure as before.

And now, from the wreck and chaos of the usual senses, there appeared to have arisen within me a sixth, all perfect. In its exercise I found a wild delight: yet a delight still physical, inasmuch as the understanding had in it no part. Motion in the animal frame had fully ceased. No muscle quivered; no nerve thrilled; no artery throbbed. But there seemed to have sprung up, in the brain, *that* of which no words could convey to the merely human intelligence even an indistinct conception. Let me term it a mental pendulous pulsation. It was the moral embodiment of man's abstract idea of *Time*. By the absolute equalization of this movement, or of such as this, had the cycles of the firmamental orbs themselves been adjusted. By its aid I measured the irregularities of the clock upon the mantel, and of the watches of the attendants. Their tickings came sonorously to my ears. The slightest deviations from the true proportion — and these deviations were omni-prevalent — affected me just as violations of abstract truth were wont, on earth, to affect the moral sense. Although

no two of the time-pieces in the chamber struck the individual seconds accurately together, yet I had no difficulty in holding steadily in mind the tones, and the respective momentary errors of each. And this — this keen, perfect, self-existing sentiment of *duration* — this sentiment existing (as man could not possibly have conceived it to exist) independently of any succession of events — this idea — this sixth sense, upspringing from the ashes of the rest, was the first obvious and certain step of the intemporal soul upon the threshold of the temporal Eternity.

It was midnight; and you still sat by my side. All others had departed from the chamber of Death. They had deposited me in the coffin. The lamps burned flickeringly; for this I knew by the tremulousness of the monotonous strains. But, suddenly these strains diminished in distinctness and in volume. Finally they ceased. The perfume in my nostrils died away. Forms affected my vision no longer. The oppression of the Darkness uplifted itself from my bosom. A dull shock like that of electricity pervaded my frame, and was followed by total loss of the idea of contact. All of what man has termed sense was merged in the sole consciousness of entity, and in the one abiding sentiment of duration. The mortal body had been at length stricken with the hand of the deadly *Decay*.

Yet had not all of sentience departed; for the consciousness and the sentiment remaining supplied some of its functions by a lethargic intuition. I appreciated the direful change now in operation upon the flesh, and, as the dreamer is sometimes aware of the bodily presence of one who leans over him, so, sweet Una, I still dully felt that you sat by my side. So, too, when

the noon of the second day came, I was not unconscious of those movements which displaced you from my side, which confined me within the coffin, which deposited me within the hearse, which bore me to the grave, which lowered me within it, which heaped heavily the mould upon me, and which thus left me, in blackness and corruption, to my sad and solemn slumbers with the worm.

And here, in the prison-house which has few secrets to disclose, there rolled away days and weeks and months; and the soul watched narrowly each second as it flew, and without effort took record of its flight — without effort and without object.

A year passed. The consciousness of *being* had grown hourly more indistinct, and that of mere *locality* had in great measure usurped its position. The idea of entity was becoming merged in that of *place*. The narrow space immediately surrounding what had been the body was now growing to be the body itself. At length, as often happens to the sleeper (by sleep and its world alone is *Death* imaged) — at length, as sometimes happened on Earth to the deep slumberer, when some flitting light half startled him into awaking, yet left him half enveloped in dreams — so to me, in the strict embrace of the *Shadow*, came *that* light which alone might have had power to startle, the light of enduring *Love*. Men toiled at the grave in which I lay darkling. They upthrew the damp earth. Upon my mouldering bones there descended the coffin of Una.

And now again all was void. That nebulous light had been extinguished. That feeble thrill had vibrated itself into quiescence. Many lustra had supervened. Dust had returned to dust. The worm had

food no more. The sense of being had at length utterly departed, and there reigned in its stead — instead of all things, dominant and perpetual, the autocrats *Place* and *Time*. For *that* which *was not*, for that which had no form, for that which had no thought, for that which had no sentience, for that which was soulless, yet of which matter formed no portion — for all this nothingness, yet for all this immortality, the grave was still a home, and the corrosive hours, co-mates.

THE CONVERSATION

OF

EIROS AND CHARMION

Πῦρ σοι προσοίσω.
I will bring fire to thee.
EURIPIDES: *Andromache*, 257.

EIROS. Why do you call me Eiros?

CHARMION. So henceforward will you always be called. You must forget, too, *my* earthly name, and speak to me as Charmion.

EIROS. This is indeed no dream!

CHARMION. Dreams are with us no more; — but of these mysteries anon. I rejoice to see you looking life-like and rational. The film of the shadow has already passed from off your eyes. Be of heart, and fear nothing. Your allotted days of stupor have expired; and, to-morrow, I will myself induct you into the full joys and wonders of your novel existence.

EIROS. True — I feel no stupor — none at all. The wild sickness and the terrible darkness have left me, and I hear no longer that mad, rushing, horrible sound, like the "voice of many waters." Yet my senses are bewildered, Charmion, with the keenness of their perception of *the new*.

CHARMION. A few days will remove all this; — but I fully understand you, and feel for you. It is

now ten earthly years since I underwent what you undergo — yet the remembrance of it hangs by me still. You have now suffered all of pain, however, which you will suffer in Aidenn.

EIROS. In Aidenn?

CHARMION. In Aidenn.

EIROS. Oh, God! — pity me, Charmion — I am overburdened with the majesty of all things — of the unknown now known — of the speculative Future merged in the august and certain Present.

CHARMION. Grapple not now with such thoughts. To-morrow we will speak of this. Your mind wavers, and its agitation will find relief in the exercise of simple memories. Look not around, nor forward — but back. I am burning with anxiety to hear the details of that stupendous event which threw you among us. Tell me of it. Let us converse of familiar things, in the old familiar language of the world which has so fearfully perished.

EIROS. Most fearfully, fearfully! — this is indeed no dream.

CHARMION. Dreams are no more. Was I much mourned, my Eiros?

EIROS. Mourned, Charmion? — oh, deeply. To that last hour of all, there hung a cloud of intense gloom and devout sorrow over your household.

CHARMION. And that last hour — speak of it. Remember that, beyond the naked fact of the catastrophe itself, I know nothing. When, coming out from among mankind, I passed into Night through the Grave — at that period, if I remember aright, the calamity which overwhelmed you was utterly unanticipated. But, indeed, I knew little of the speculative philosophy of the day.

EIROS. The individual calamity was, as you say, entirely unanticipated; but analogous misfortunes had been long a subject of discussion with astronomers. I need scarce tell you, my friend, that, even when you left us, men had agreed to understand those passages in the most holy writings which speak of the final destruction of all things by fire, as having reference to the orb of the earth alone. But in regard to the immediate agency of the ruin, speculation had been at fault from that epoch in astronomical knowledge in which the comets were divested of the terrors of flame. The very moderate density of these bodies had been well established. They had been observed to pass among the satellites of Jupiter, without bringing about any sensible alteration either in the masses or in the orbits of these secondary planets. We had long regarded the wanderers as vapory creations of inconceivable tenuity, and as altogether incapable of doing injury to our substantial globe, even in the event of contact. But contact was not in any degree dreaded; for the elements of all the comets were accurately known. That among *them* we should look for the agency of the threatened fiery destruction had been for many years considered an inadmissible idea. But wonders and wild fancies had been, of late days, strangely rife among mankind; and, although it was only with a few of the ignorant that actual apprehension prevailed, upon the announcement by astronomers of a *new* comet, yet this announcement was generally received with I know not what of agitation and mistrust.

The elements of the strange orb were immediately calculated, and it was at once conceded by all observers, that its path, at perihelion, would bring it

into very close proximity with the earth. There were two or three astronomers, of secondary note, who resolutely maintained that a contact was inevitable. I cannot very well express to you the effect of this intelligence upon the people. For a few short days they would not believe an assertion which their intellect, so long employed among worldly considerations, could not in any manner grasp. But the truth of a vitally important fact soon makes its way into the understanding of even the most stolid. Finally, all men saw that astronomical knowledge lied not, and they awaited the comet. Its approach was not, at first, seemingly rapid; nor was its appearance of very unusual character. It was of a dull red, and had little perceptible train. For seven or eight days we saw no material increase in its apparent diameter, and but a partial alteration in its color. Meantime, the ordinary affairs of men were discarded, and all interests absorbed in a growing discussion, instituted by the philosophic, in respect to the cometary nature. Even the grossly ignorant aroused their sluggish capacities to such considerations. The learned *now* gave their intellect — their soul — to no such points as the allaying of fear, or to the sustenance of loved theory. They sought — they panted for right views. They groaned for perfected knowledge. *Truth* arose in the purity of her strength and exceeding majesty, and the wise bowed down and adored.

That material injury to our globe or to its inhabitants would result from the apprehended contact was an opinion which hourly lost ground among the wise; and the wise were now freely permitted to rule the reason and the fancy of the crowd. It was demonstrated that the density of the comet's nucleus was

far less than that of our rarest gas; and the harmless passage of a similar visitor among the satellites of Jupiter was a point strongly insisted upon, and which served greatly to allay terror. Theologists, with an earnestness fear-enkindled, dwelt upon the biblical prophecies, and expounded them to the people with a directness and simplicity of which no previous instance had been known. That the final destruction of the earth must be brought about by the agency of fire was urged with a spirit that enforced everywhere conviction; and that the comets were of no fiery nature (as all men now knew) was a truth which relieved all, in a great measure, from the apprehension of the great calamity foretold. It is noticeable that the popular prejudices and vulgar errors in regard to pestilences and wars — errors which were wont to prevail upon every appearance of a comet — were now altogether unknown. As if by some sudden convulsive exertion, reason had at once hurled superstition from her throne. The feeblest intellect had derived vigor from excessive interest.

What minor evils might arise from the contact were points of elaborate question. The learned spoke of slight geological disturbances, of probable alterations in climate, and consequently in vegetation; of possible magnetic and electric influences. Many held that no visible or perceptible effect would in any manner be produced. While such discussions were going on, their subject gradually approached, growing larger in apparent diameter, and of a more brilliant lustre. Mankind grew paler as it came. All human operations were suspended.

There was an epoch in the course of the general sentiment when the comet had attained, at length, a

size surpassing that of any previously recorded visitation. The people now, dismissing any lingering hope that the astronomers were wrong, experienced all the certainty of evil. The chimerical aspect of their terror was gone. The hearts of the stoutest of our race beat violently within their bosoms. A very few days sufficed, however, to merge even such feelings in sentiments more unendurable. We could no longer apply to the strange orb any *accustomed* thoughts. Its *historical* attributes had disappeared. It oppressed us with a hideous *novelty* of emotion. We saw it not as an astronomical phenomenon in the heavens, but as an incubus upon our hearts, and a shadow upon our brains. It had taken, with inconceivable rapidity, the character of a gigantic mantle of rare flame, extending from horizon to horizon.

Yet a day, and men breathed with greater freedom. It was clear that we were already within the influence of the comet; yet we lived. We even felt an unusual elasticity of frame and vivacity of mind. The exceeding tenuity of the object of our dread was apparent; for all heavenly objects were plainly visible through it. Meantime, our vegetation had perceptibly altered; and we gained faith, from this predicted circumstance, in the foresight of the wise. A wild luxuriance of foliage, utterly unknown before, burst out upon every vegetable thing.

Yet another day — and the evil was not altogether upon us. It was now evident that its nucleus would first reach us. A wild change had come over all men; and the first sense of *pain* was the wild signal for general lamentation and horror. This first sense of pain lay in a rigorous constriction of the breast and lungs, and an insufferable dryness of the skin. It

could not be denied that our atmosphere was radically affected; the conformation of this atmosphere, and the possible modifications to which it might be subjected, were now the topics of discussion. The result of investigation sent an electric thrill of the intensest terror through the universal heart of man.

It had been long known that the air which encircled us was a compound of oxygen and nitrogen gases, in the proportion of twenty-one measures of oxygen, and seventy-nine of nitrogen, in every one hundred of the atmosphere. Oxygen, which was the principle of combustion, and the vehicle of heat, was absolutely necessary to the support of animal life, and was the most powerful and energetic agent in nature. Nitrogen, on the contrary, was incapable of supporting either animal life or flame. An unnatural excess of oxygen would result, it had been ascertained, in just such an elevation of the animal spirits as we had latterly experienced. It was the pursuit, the extension of the idea, which had engendered awe. What would be the result of *a total extraction of the nitrogen?* A combustion irresistible, all-devouring, omniprevalent, immediate; the entire fulfilment, in all their minute and terrible details, of the fiery and horror-inspiring denunciations of the prophecies of the Holy Book.

Why need I paint, Charmion, the now disenchained frenzy of mankind? That tenuity in the comet, which had previously inspired us with hope, was now the source of the bitterness of despair. In its impalpable gaseous character we clearly perceived the consummation of Fate. Meantime a day again passed — bearing away with it the last shadow of Hope. We gasped in the rapid modification of the air. The red

blood bounded tumultuously through its strict channels. A furious delirium possessed all men; and, with arms rigidly outstretched towards the threatening heavens, they trembled and shrieked aloud. But the nucleus of the destroyer was now upon us; even here in Aidenn, I shudder while I speak. Let me be brief — brief as the ruin that overwhelmed. For a moment there was a wild lurid light alone, visiting and penetrating all things. Then — let us bow down, Charmion, before the excessive majesty of the great God! — then, there came a shouting and pervading sound, as if from the mouth itself of HIM; while the whole incumbent mass of ether in which we existed burst at once into a species of intense flame, for whose surpassing brilliancy and all-fervid heat even the angels in the high heaven of pure knowledge have no name. Thus ended all.

THE POWER OF WORDS

OINOS. Pardon, Agathos, the weakness of a spirit new-fledged with immortality!

AGATHOS. You have spoken nothing, my Oinos, for which pardon is to be demanded. Not even here is knowledge a thing of intuition. For wisdom, ask of the angels freely, that it may be given!

OINOS. But, in this existence, I dreamed that I should be at once cognizant of all things, and thus at once happy in being cognizant of all.

AGATHOS. Ah, not in knowledge is happiness, but in the acquisition of knowledge! In forever knowing, we are forever blessed; but to know all, were the curse of a fiend.

OINOS. But does not The Most High know all?

AGATHOS. *That* (since he is The Most Happy) must be still the *one* thing unknown even to HIM.

OINOS. But, since we grow hourly in knowledge, must not *at last* all things be known?

AGATHOS. Look down into the abysmal distances! attempt to force the gaze down the multitudinous vistas of the stars, as we sweep slowly through them thus — and thus — and thus! Even the spiritual vision, is it not at all points arrested by the continuous golden walls of the universe? — the walls of the myriads of the shining bodies that mere number has appeared to blend into unity?

OINOS. I clearly perceive that the infinity of matter is no dream.

AGATHOS. There are *no* dreams in Aidenn; but it is here whispered that, of this infinity of matter, the *sole* purpose is to afford infinite springs, at which the soul may allay the thirst *to know* which is forever unquenchable within it — since to quench it would be to extinguish the soul's self. Question me then, my Oinos, freely and without fear. Come! we will leave to the left the loud harmony of the Pleiades, and swoop outward from the throne into the starry meadows beyond Orion, where, for pansies and violets and heart's-ease, are the beds of the triplicate and triple-tinted suns.

OINOS. And now, Agathos, as we proceed, instruct me! speak to me in the earth's familiar tones! I understood not what you hinted to me, just now, of the modes or of the methods of what, during mortality, we were accustomed to call Creation. Do you mean to say that the Creator is not God?

AGATHOS. I mean to say that the Deity does not create.

OINOS. Explain!

AGATHOS. In the beginning *only*, he created. The seeming creatures, which are now throughout the universe so perpetually springing into being, can only be considered as the mediate or indirect, not as the direct or immediate, results of the Divine creative power.

OINOS. Among men, my Agathos, this idea would be considered heretical in the extreme.

AGATHOS. Among angels, my Oinos, it is seen to be simply true.

OINOS. I can comprehend you thus far — that certain operations of what we term Nature, or the natural

laws, will, under certain conditions, give rise to that which has all the *appearance* of creation. Shortly before the final overthrow of the earth there were, I well remember, many very successful experiments in what some philosophers were weak enough to denominate the creation of animalculæ.

AGATHOS. The cases of which you speak were, in fact, instances of the secondary creation — and of the *only* species of creation which has ever been, since the first word spoke into existence the first law.

OINOS. Are not the starry worlds that, from the abyss of nonentity, burst hourly forth into the heavens — are not these stars, Agathos, the immediate handiwork of the King?

AGATHOS. Let me endeavor, my Oinos, to lead you, step by step, to the conception I intend. You are well aware that, as no thought can perish, so no act is without infinite result. We moved our hands, for example, when we were dwellers on the earth, and, in so doing, we gave vibration to the atmosphere which engirdled it. This vibration was indefinitely extended, till it gave impulse to every particle of the earth's air, which thenceforward, *and forever*, was actuated by the one movement of the hand. This fact the mathematicians of our globe well knew. They made the special effects, indeed, wrought in the fluid by special impulses, the subject of exact calculation — so that it became easy to determine in what precise period an impulse of given extent would engirdle the orb, and impress (forever) every atom of the atmosphere circumambient. Retrograding, they found no difficulty, from a given effect, under given conditions, in determining the value of the original impulse. Now the mathematicians who saw that the

results of any given impulse were absolutely endless — and who saw that a portion of these results were accurately traceable through the agency of algebraic analysis — who saw, too, the facility of the retrogradation — these men saw, at the same time, that this species of analysis, itself, had within itself a capacity for indefinite progress — that there were no bounds conceivable to its advancement and applicability, except within the intellect of him who advanced or applied it. But at this point our mathematicians paused.

OINOS. And why, Agathos, should they have proceeded?

AGATHOS. Because there were some considerations of deep interest beyond. It was deducible from what they knew, that to a being of infinite understanding — one to whom the *perfection* of the algebraic analysis lay unfolded — there could be no difficulty in tracing every impulse given the air, and the ether through the air, to the remotest consequences at any even infinitely remote epoch of time. It is indeed demonstrable that every such impulse, *given the air*, must, *in the end*, impress every individual thing that exists *within the universe;* and the being of infinite understanding, the being whom we have imagined, might trace the remote undulations of the impulse: trace them upward and onward in their influences upon all particles of all matter — upward and onward forever in their modifications of old forms, or, in other words, *in their creation of new* — until he found them reflected, unimpressive *at last*, back from the throne of the Godhead. And not only could such a being do this, but at any epoch, should a given result be afforded him — should one of these numberless comets, for example, be pre-

sented to his inspection — he could have no difficulty in determining, by the analytic retrogradation, to what original impulse it was due. This power of retrogradation in its absolute fulness and perfection — this faculty of referring at *all* epochs *all* effects to *all* causes — is of course the prerogative of the Deity alone; but in every variety of degree, short of the absolute perfection, is the power itself exercised by the whole host of the Angelic Intelligences.

OINOS. But you speak merely of impulses upon the air.

AGATHOS. In speaking of the air, I referred only to the earth; but the general proposition has reference to impulses upon the ether, which, since it pervades, and alone pervades, all space, is thus the great medium of *creation*.

OINOS. Then all motion, of whatever nature, creates?

AGATHOS. It must; but a true philosophy has long taught that the source of all motion is thought — and the source of all thought is —

OINOS. God.

AGATHOS. I have spoken to you, Oinos, as to a child of the fair Earth which lately perished, of impulses upon the atmosphere of the Earth.

OINOS. You did.

AGATHOS. And while I thus spoke, did there not cross your mind some thought of the *physical power of words?* Is not every word an impulse on the air?

OINOS. But why, Agathos, do you weep — and why, oh, why do your wings droop as we hover above this fair star, which is the greenest and yet most terrible of all we have encountered in our flight? Its brilliant flowers look like a fairy dream, but

its fierce volcanoes like the passions of a turbulent heart.

AGATHOS. They *are!* — they *are!* This wild star — it is now three centuries since, with clasped hands, and with streaming eyes, at the feet of my beloved, I spoke it, with a few passionate sentences, into birth. Its brilliant flowers *are* the dearest of all unfulfilled dreams, and its raging volcanoes *are* the passions of the most turbulent and unhallowed of hearts.

FINALE

SILENCE — A FABLE

Εὕδουσιν δ' ὀρέων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες,
Πρώονες τε καὶ χαράδραι.

ALCMAN: 60 [10] 646.

The mountain pinnacles slumber; valleys, crags, and caves *are silent.*

"LISTEN to *me*," said the Demon, as he placed his hand upon my head. "The region of which I speak is a dreary region in Libya, by the borders of the river Zäire. And there is no quiet there, nor silence.

"The waters of the river have a saffron and sickly hue; and they flow not onward to the sea, but palpitate forever and forever beneath the red eye of the sun with a tumultuous and convulsive motion. For many miles on either side of the river's oozy bed is a pale desert of gigantic water-lilies. They sigh one unto the other in that solitude, and stretch towards the heaven their long and ghastly necks, and nod to and fro their everlasting heads. And there is an indistinct murmur which cometh out from among them like the rushing of subterrene water. And they sigh one unto the other.

"But there is a boundary to their realm — the boundary of the dark, horrible, lofty forest. There, like the waves about the Hebrides, the low under-

wood is agitated continually. But there is no wind throughout the heaven. And the tall primeval trees rock eternally hither and thither with a crashing and mighty sound. And from their high summits, one by one, drop everlasting dews. And at the roots strange poisonous flowers lie writhing in perturbed slumber. And overhead, with a rustling and loud noise, the gray clouds rush westwardly forever, until they roll, a cataract, over the fiery wall of the horizon. But there is no wind throughout the heaven. And by the shores of the river Zäire there is neither quiet nor silence.

"It was night, and the rain fell; and, falling, it was rain, but, having fallen, it was blood. And I stood in the morass among the tall lilies, and the rain fell upon my head — and the lilies sighed one unto the other in the solemnity of their desolation.

"And, all at once, the moon arose through the thin ghastly mist, and was crimson in color. And mine eyes fell upon a huge gray rock which stood by the shore of the river, and was lighted by the light of the moon. And the rock was gray, and ghastly, and tall, — and the rock was gray. Upon its front were characters engraven in the stone; and I walked through the morass of water-lilies, until I came close unto the shore, that I might read the characters upon the stone. But I could not decipher them. And I was going back into the morass, when the moon shone with a fuller red, and I turned and looked again upon the rock, and upon the characters; — and the characters were DESOLATION.

"And I looked upwards, and there stood a man upon the summit of the rock; and I hid myself among the water-lilies that I might discover the actions of the man. And the man was tall and stately in form, and

was wrapped up from his shoulders to his feet in the toga of old Rome. And the outlines of his figure were indistinct — but his features were the features of a deity; for the mantle of the night, and of the mist, and of the moon, and of the dew, had left uncovered the features of his face. And his brow was lofty with thought, and his eye wild with care; and in the few furrows upon his cheek I read the fables of sorrow, and weariness, and disgust with mankind, and a longing after solitude.

"And the man sat upon the rock, and leaned his head upon his hand, and looked out upon the desolation. He looked down into the low, unquiet shrubbery, and up into the tall primeval trees, and up higher at the rustling heaven, and into the crimson moon. And I lay close within shelter of the lilies, and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude; — but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"And the man turned his attention from the heaven, and looked out upon the dreary river Zäire, and upon the yellow ghastly waters, and upon the pale legions of the water-lilies. And the man listened to the sighs of the water-lilies, and to the murmur that came up from among them. And I lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude; — but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"Then I went down into the recesses of the morass, and waded afar in among the wilderness of the lilies and called unto the hippopotami which dwelt among the fens in the recesses of the morass. And the hippopotami heard my call, and came, with the behemoth, unto the foot of the rock, and roared loudly and fear-

fully beneath the moon. And I lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude; — but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"Then I cursed the elements with the curse of tumult; and a frightful tempest gathered in the heaven, where before there had been no wind. And the heaven became livid with the violence of the tempest — and the rain beat upon the head of the man — and the floods of the river came down — and the river was tormented into foam — and the water-lilies shrieked within their beds — and the forest crumbled before the wind — and the thunder rolled — and the lightning fell — and the rock rocked to its foundation. And I lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude; — but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

"Then I grew angry and cursed, with the curse of *silence*, the river, and the lilies, and the wind, and the forest, and the heaven, and the thunder, and the sighs of the water-lilies. And they became accursed, and *were still*. And the moon ceased to totter up its pathway to heaven — and the thunder died away — and the lightning did not flash — and the clouds hung motionless — and the waters sunk to their level and remained — and the trees ceased to rock — and the water-lilies sighed no more — and the murmur was heard no longer from among them, nor any shadow of sound throughout the vast illimitable desert. And I looked upon the characters of the rock, and they were changed; — and the characters were SILENCE.

"And mine eyes fell upon the countenance of the man, and his countenance was wan with terror. And,

hurriedly, he raised his head from his hand, and stood forth upon the rock and listened. But there was no voice throughout the vast illimitable desert, and the characters upon the rock were SILENCE. And the man shuddered, and turned his face away, and fled afar off, in haste, so that I beheld him no more."

. . . . . .

Now there are fine tales in the volumes of the Magi — in the iron-bound, melancholy volumes of the Magi. Therein, I say, are glorious histories of the Heaven, and of the Earth, and of the mighty Sea — and of the Genii that overruled the sea, and the earth, and the lofty heaven. There was much lore too in the sayings which were said by the Sibyls; and holy, holy things were heard of old by the dim leaves that trembled around Dodona — but, as Allah liveth, that fable which the Demon told me, as he sat by my side in the shadow of the tomb, I hold to be the most wonderful of all! And as the Demon made an end of his story, he fell back within the cavity of the tomb and laughed. And I could not laugh with the Demon, and he cursed me because I could not laugh. And the lynx, which dwelleth forever in the tomb, came out therefrom, and lay down at the feet of the Demon, and looked at him steadily in the face.

II

OLD-WORLD ROMANCE

OLD-WORLD ROMANCE

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

(NORTHERN ITALY)

THE "Red Death" had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its avatar and its seal — the redness and the horror of blood. There were sharp pains, and sudden dizziness, and then profuse bleeding at the pores, with dissolution. The scarlet stains upon the body, and especially upon the face, of the victim were the pest ban which shut him out from the aid and from the sympathy of his fellow-men. And the whole seizure, progress, and termination of the disease were the incidents of half an hour.

But the Prince Prospero was happy and dauntless and sagacious. When his dominions were half depopulated, he summoned to his presence a thousand hale and light-hearted friends from among the knights and dames of his court, and with these retired to the deep seclusion of one of his castellated abbeys. This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the Prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong and lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers, and welded the bolts.

They resolved to leave means neither of ingress or egress to the sudden impulses of despair or of frenzy from within. The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself. In the mean time it was folly to grieve, or to think. The Prince had provided all the appliances of pleasure. There were buffoons, there were improvisatori, there were ballet-dancers, there were musicians, there was Beauty, there was wine. All these and security were within. Without was the "Red Death."

It was toward the close of the fifth or sixth month of his seclusion, and while the pestilence raged most furiously abroad, that the Prince Prospero entertained his thousand friends at a masked ball of the most unusual magnificence.

It was a voluptuous scene, that masquerade. But first let me tell of the rooms in which it was held. There were seven — an imperial suite. In many palaces, however, such suites form a long and straight vista, while the folding-doors slide back nearly to the walls on either hand, so that the view of the whole extent is scarcely impeded. Here the case was very different, as might have been expected from the Prince's love of the bizarre. The apartments were so irregularly disposed that the vision embraced but little more than one at a time. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect. To the right and left, in the middle of each wall, a tall and narrow Gothic window looked out upon a closed corridor which pursued the windings of the suite. These windows were of stained glass, whose color varied in accordance with the prevailing hue of the decorations of the chamber into which it

opened. That at the eastern extremity was hung, for example, in blue — and vividly blue were its windows. The second chamber was purple in its ornaments and tapestries, and here the panes were purple. The third was green throughout, and so were the casements. The fourth was furnished and lighted with orange, the fifth with white, the sixth with violet. The seventh apartment was closely shrouded in black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But, in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet — a deep blood-color. Now in no one of the seven apartments was there any lamp or candelabrum, amid the profusion of golden ornaments that lay scattered to and fro or depended from the roof. There was no light of any kind emanating from lamp or candle within the suite of chambers. But in the corridors that followed the suite there stood, opposite to each window, a heavy tripod, bearing a brazier of fire, that projected its rays through the tinted glass and so glaringly illumined the room. And thus were produced a multitude of gaudy and fantastic appearances. But in the western or black chamber the effect of the firelight that streamed upon the dark hangings through the blood-tinted panes was ghastly in the extreme, and produced so wild a look upon the countenances of those who entered that there were few of the company bold enough to set foot within its precincts at all.

It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made

the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical, but of so peculiar a note and emphasis that, at each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company; and, while the chimes of the clock yet rang, it was observed that the giddiest grew pale, and the more aged and sedate passed their hands over their brows as if in confused revery or meditation. But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly; the musicians looked at each other and smiled as if at their own nervousness and folly, and made whispering vows, each to the other, that the next chiming of the clock should produce in them no similar emotion; and then, after the lapse of sixty minutes (which embrace three thousand and six hundred seconds of the Time that flies) there came yet another chiming of the clock, and then were the same disconcert and tremulousness and meditation as before.

But, in spite of these things, it was a gay and magnificent revel. The tastes of the Prince were peculiar. He had a fine eye for colors and effects. He disregarded the *decora* of mere fashion. His plans were bold and fiery, and his conceptions glowed with barbaric lustre. There are some who would have thought him mad. His followers felt that he was not. It was necessary to hear and see and touch him to be *sure* that he was not.

He had directed, in great part, the movable em-

bellishments of the seven chambers, upon occasion of this great *fête*; and it was his own guiding taste which had given character to the masqueraders. Be sure they were grotesque. There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm — much of what has been since seen in *Hernani*. There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust. To and fro in the seven chambers there stalked, in fact, a multitude of dreams. And these — the dreams — writhed in and about, taking hue from the rooms, and causing the wild music of the orchestra to seem as the echo of their steps. And, anon, there strikes the ebony clock which stands in the hall of the velvet. And then, for a moment, all is still, and all is silent save the voice of the clock. The dreams are stiff-frozen as they stand. But the echoes of the chime die away — they have endured but an instant — and a light, half-subdued laughter floats after them as they depart. And now again the music swells, and the dreams live, and writhe to and fro more merrily than ever, taking hue from the many tinted windows through which stream the rays from the tripods. But to the chamber which lies most westwardly of the seven, there are now none of the maskers who venture; for the night is waning away, and there flows a ruddier light through the blood-colored panes; and the blackness of the sable drapery appalls; and to him whose foot falls upon the sable carpet, there comes from the near clock of ebony a muffled peal more solemnly emphatic than any which

reaches *their* ears who indulge in the more remote gayeties of the other apartments.

But these other apartments were densely crowded, and in them beat feverishly the heart of life. And the revel went whirlingly on, until at length there commenced the sounding of midnight upon the clock. And then the music ceased, as I have told; and the evolutions of the waltzers were quieted; and there was an uneasy cessation of all things as before. But now there were twelve strokes to be sounded by the bell of the clock; and thus it happened, perhaps, that more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtful among those who revelled. And thus too it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before. And the rumor of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise — then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust.

In an assembly of phantasms such as I have painted, it may well be supposed that no ordinary appearance could have excited such sensation. In truth the masquerade license of the night was nearly unlimited; but the figure in question had out-Heroded Herod, and gone beyond the bounds of even the Prince's indefinite decorum. There are chords in the hearts of the most reckless which cannot be touched without emotion. Even with the utterly lost, to whom life and death are equally jests, there are matters of

which no jest can be made. The whole company, indeed, seemed now deeply to feel that in the costume and bearing of the stranger neither wit nor propriety existed. The figure was tall and gaunt, and shrouded from head to foot in the habiliments of the grave. The mask which concealed the visage was made so nearly to resemble the countenance of a stiffened corpse that the closest scrutiny must have had difficulty in detecting the cheat. And yet all this might have been endured, if not approved, by the mad revellers around. But the mummer had gone so far as to assume the type of the Red Death. His vesture was dabbled in *blood* — and his broad brow, with all the features of the face, was besprinkled with the scarlet horror.

When the eyes of Prince Prospero fell upon this spectral image (which with a slow and solemn movement, as if more fully to sustain its *rôle*, stalked to and fro among the waltzers) he was seen to be convulsed, in the first moment, with a strong shudder either of terror or distaste; but, in the next, his brow reddened with rage.

"Who dares?" he demanded hoarsely of the courtiers who stood near him — "who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him — that we may know whom we have to hang at sunrise, from the battlements!"

It was in the eastern or blue chamber in which stood the Prince Prospero as he uttered these words. They rang throughout the seven rooms loudly and clearly — for the Prince was a bold and robust man, and the music had become hushed at the waving of his hand.

It was in the blue room where stood the Prince,

with a group of pale courtiers by his side. At first, as he spoke, there was a slight rushing movement of this group in the direction of the intruder, who at the moment was also near at hand, and now, with deliberate and stately step, made closer approach to the speaker. But from a certain nameless awe with which the mad assumptions of the mummer had inspired the whole party, there were found none who put forth hand to seize him; so that, unimpeded, he passed within a yard of the Prince's person; and, while the vast assembly, as if with one impulse, shrank from the centres of the rooms to the walls, he made his way uninterruptedly, but with the same solemn and measured step which had distinguished him from the first, through the blue chamber to the purple — through the purple to the green — through the green to the orange — through this again to the white — and even thence to the violet, ere a decided movement had been made to arrest him. It was then, however, that the Prince Prospero, maddening with rage and the shame of his own momentary cowardice, rushed hurriedly through the six chambers, while none followed him on account of a deadly terror that had seized upon all. He bore aloft a drawn dagger, and had approached, in rapid impetuosity, to within three or four feet of the retreating figure, when the latter, having attained the extremity of the velvet apartment, turned suddenly and confronted his pursuer. There was a sharp cry — and the dagger dropped gleaming upon the sable carpet, upon which, instantly afterwards, fell prostrate in death the Prince Prospero. Then, summoning the wild courage of despair, a throng of the revellers at once threw themselves into the black apartment, and, seizing the mummer, whose

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

tall figure stood erect and motionless within the shadow of the ebony clock, gasped in unutterable horror at finding the grave cerements and corpse-like mask, which they handled with so violent a rudeness, untenanted by any tangible form.

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revellers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.

THE ASSIGNATION

(VENICE)

Stay for me there! I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.
HENRY KING, BISHOP OF CHICHESTER: *The Exequy.*

ILL-FATED and mysterious man! bewildered in the brilliancy of thine own imagination, and fallen in the flames of thine own youth! Again in fancy I behold thee! Once more thy form hath risen before me! — not — oh, not as thou art — in the cold valley and shadow — but as thou *shouldst be* — squandering away a life of magnificent meditation in that city of dim visions, thine own Venice — which is a star-beloved Elysium of the sea, and the wide windows of whose Palladian palaces look down with a deep and bitter meaning upon the secrets of her silent waters. Yes! I repeat it — as thou *shouldst be.* There are surely other worlds than this: other thoughts than the thoughts of the multitude, other speculations than the speculations of the sophist. Who then shall call thy conduct into question? who blame thee for thy visionary hours, or denounce those occupations as a wasting away of life, which were but the overflowings of thine everlasting energies?

It was at Venice, beneath the covered archway there called the *Ponte di Sospiri*, that I met for the

third or fourth time the person of whom I speak. It is with a confused recollection that I bring to mind the circumstances of that meeting. Yet I remember —ah! how should I forget?—the deep midnight, the Bridge of Sighs, the beauty of woman, and the Genius of Romance that stalked up and down the narrow canal.

It was a night of unusual gloom. The great clock of the Piazza had sounded the fifth hour of the Italian evening. The square of the Campanile lay silent and deserted, and the lights in the old Ducal Palace were dying fast away. I was returning home from the Piazetta, by way of the Grand Canal. But as my gondola arrived opposite the mouth of the canal San Marco, a female voice from its recesses broke suddenly upon the night, in one wild, hysterical, and long-continued shriek. Startled at the sound, I sprang upon my feet, while the gondolier, letting slip his single oar, lost it in the pitchy darkness beyond a chance of recovery, and we were consequently left to the guidance of the current which here sets from the greater into the smaller channel. Like some huge and sable-feathered condor, we were slowly drifting down towards the Bridge of Sighs, when a thousand flambeaus flashing from the windows, and down the staircases of the Ducal Palace, turned all at once that deep gloom into a livid and preternatural day.

A child, slipping from the arms of its own mother, had fallen from an upper window of the lofty structure into the deep and dim canal. The quiet waters had closed placidly over their victim; and, although my own gondola was the only one in sight, many a stout swimmer, already in the stream, was seeking in vain upon the surface the treasure which was to be

found, alas! only within the abyss. Upon the broad black marble flagstones at the entrance of the palace, and a few steps above the water, stood a figure which none who then saw can have ever since forgotten. It was the Marchesa Aphrodite — the adoration of all Venice — the gayest of the gay — the most lovely where all were beautiful — but still the young wife of the old and intriguing Mentoni, and the mother of that fair child, her first and only one, who now, deep beneath the murky water, was thinking in bitterness of heart upon her sweet caresses, and exhausting its little life in struggles to call upon her name.

She stood alone. Her small, bare and silvery feet gleamed in the black mirror of marble beneath her. Her hair, not as yet more than half loosened for the night from its ball-room array, clustered, amid a shower of diamonds, round and round her classical head, in curls like those of the young hyacinth. A snowy-white and gauze-like drapery seemed to be nearly the sole covering to her delicate form; but the midsummer and midnight air was hot, sullen, and still, and no motion in the statue-like form itself stirred even the folds of that raiment of very vapor which hung around it as the heavy marble hangs around the Niobe. Yet, strange to say, her large lustrous eyes were not turned downwards upon that grave wherein her brightest hope lay buried — but riveted in a widely different direction! The prison of the Old Republic is, I think, the stateliest building in all Venice, but how could that lady gaze so fixedly upon it, when beneath her lay stifling her only child? Yon dark, gloomy niche, too, yawns right opposite her chamber window — what, then, *could* there be in its shadows, in its architecture, in its ivy-wreathed and

solemn cornices, that the Marchesa di Mentoni had not wondered at a thousand times before? Nonsense! Who does not remember that, at such a time as this, the eye, like a shattered mirror, multiplies the images of its sorrow, and sees in innumerable far off places the woe which is close at hand?

Many steps above the Marchesa, and within the arch of the water-gate, stood, in full dress, the satyr-like figure of Mentoni himself. He was occasionally occupied in thrumming a guitar, and seemed *ennuyé* to the very death, as at intervals he gave directions for the recovery of his child. Stupefied and aghast, I had myself no power to move from the upright position I had assumed upon first hearing the shriek, and must have presented to the eyes of the agitated group a spectral and ominous appearance, as with pale countenance and rigid limbs I floated down among them in that funereal gondola.

All efforts proved in vain. Many of the most energetic in the search were relaxing their exertions, and yielding to a gloomy sorrow. There seemed but little hope for the child (how much less than for the mother!); but now, from the interior of that dark niche which has been already mentioned as forming a part of the Old Republican prison, and as fronting the lattice of the Marchesa, a figure muffled in a cloak stepped out within reach of the light, and, pausing a moment upon the verge of the giddy descent, plunged headlong into the canal. As in an instant afterwards he stood, with the still living and breathing child within his grasp, upon the marble flagstones by the side of the Marchesa, his cloak, heavy with the drenching water, became unfastened, and, falling in folds about his feet, discovered to the wonder-stricken spectators the grace-

ful person of a very young man, with the sound of whose name the greater part of Europe was then ringing.

No word spoke the deliverer. But the Marchesa! She will now receive her child — she will press it to her heart — she will cling to its little form, and smother it with her caresses. Alas! *another's* arms have taken it from the stranger — *another's* arms have taken it away, and borne it afar off, unnoticed, into the palace! And the Marchesa! Her lip — her beautiful lip trembles; tears are gathering in her eyes — those eyes which, like Pliny's acanthus, are "soft and almost liquid." Yes, tears are gathering in those eyes — and see! the entire woman thrills throughout the soul, and the statue has started into life! The pallor of the marble countenance, the swelling of the marble bosom, the very purity of the marble feet, we behold suddenly flushed over with a tide of ungovernable crimson; and a slight shudder quivers about her delicate frame, as a gentle air at Napoli about the rich silver lilies in the grass.

Why *should* that lady blush? To this demand there is no answer — except that, having left, in the eager haste and terror of a mother's heart, the privacy of her own boudoir, she has neglected to enthrall her tiny feet in their slippers, and utterly forgotten to throw over her Venetian shoulders that drapery which is their due. What other possible reason could there have been for her so blushing? — for the glance of those wild appealing eyes? for the unusual tumult of that throbbing bosom? for the convulsive pressure of that trembling hand — that hand which fell, as Mentoni turned into the palace, accidentally upon the hand of the stranger? What reason could there have

been for the low — the singularly low tone of those unmeaning words which the lady uttered hurriedly in bidding him adieu? "Thou hast conquered," she said, or the murmurs of the water deceived me; "thou hast conquered — one hour after sunrise — we shall meet — so let it be!"

. . . . . .

The tumult had subsided, the lights had died away within the palace, and the stranger, whom I now recognized, stood alone upon the flags. He shook with inconceivable agitation, and his eye glanced around in search of a gondola. I could not do less than offer him the service of my own; and he accepted the civility. Having obtained an oar at the water-gate, we proceeded together to his residence, while he rapidly recovered his self-possession, and spoke of our former slight acquaintance in terms of great apparent cordiality.

There are some subjects upon which I take pleasure in being minute. The person of the stranger — let me call him by this title, who to all the world was still a stranger — the person of the stranger is one of these subjects. In height he might have been below rather than above the medium size; although there were moments of intense passion when his frame actually *expanded* and belied the assertion. The light, almost slender, symmetry of his figure promised more of that ready activity which he evinced at the Bridge of Sighs, than of that Herculean strength which he has been known to wield without an effort, upon occasions of more dangerous emergency. With the mouth and chin of a deity — singular, wild, full, liquid eyes, whose shadows varied from pure hazel to intense and brilliant jet — and a profusion of curling, black hair,

from which a forehead of unusual breadth gleamed forth at intervals all light and ivory — his were features than which I have seen none more classically regular, except, perhaps, the marble ones of the Emperor Commodus. Yet his countenance was, nevertheless, one of those which all men have seen at some period of their lives, and have never afterwards seen again. It had no peculiar — it had no settled predominant expression to be fastened upon the memory; a countenance seen and instantly forgotten, but forgotten with a vague and never-ceasing desire of recalling it to mind. Not that the spirit of each rapid passion failed, at any time, to throw its own distinct image upon the mirror of that face; but that the mirror, mirror-like, retained no vestige of the passion, when the passion had departed.

Upon leaving him on the night of our adventure, he solicited me, in what I thought an urgent manner, to call upon him *very* early the next morning. Shortly after sunrise I found myself accordingly at his Palazzo, one of those huge structures of gloomy, yet fantastic pomp, which tower above the waters of the Grand Canal in the vicinity of the Rialto. I was shown up a broad winding staircase of mosaics into an apartment whose unparalleled splendor burst through the opening door with an actual glare, making me blind and dizzy with luxuriousness.

I knew my acquaintance to be wealthy. Report had spoken of his possessions in terms which I had even ventured to call terms of ridiculous exaggeration. But as I gazed about me, I could not bring myself to believe that the wealth of any subject in Europe could have supplied the princely magnificence which burned and blazed around.

Although, as I say, the sun had arisen, yet the room was still brilliantly lighted up. I judged from this circumstance, as well as from an air of exhaustion in the countenance of my friend, that he had not retired to bed during the whole of the preceding night. In the architecture and embellishments of the chamber the evident design had been to dazzle and astound. Little attention had been paid to the *decora* of what is technically called *keeping*, or to the proprieties of nationality. The eye wandered from object to object, and rested upon none — neither the grotesques of the Greek painters, nor the sculptures of the best Italian days, nor the huge carvings of untutored Egypt. Rich draperies in every part of the room trembled to the vibration of low, melancholy music, whose origin was not to be discovered. The senses were oppressed by mingled and conflicting perfumes, reeking up from strange convolute censers, together with multitudinous flaring and flickering tongues of emerald and violet fire. The rays of the newly risen sun poured in upon the whole, through windows, formed each of a single pane of crimson-tinted glass. Glancing to and fro in a thousand reflections, from curtains which rolled from their cornices like cataracts of molten silver, the beams of natural glory mingled at length fitfully with the artificial light, and lay weltering in subdued masses upon a carpet of rich, liquid-looking cloth of Chili gold.

"Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!" — laughed the proprietor, motioning me to a seat as I entered the room, and throwing himself back at full length upon an ottoman. "I see," said he, perceiving that I could not immediately reconcile myself to the *bienséance* of so singular a welcome — "I see you are astonished at

my apartment — at my statues — my pictures — my originality of conception in architecture and upholstery! absolutely drunk, eh, with my magnificence? But pardon me, my dear sir," (here his tone of voice dropped to the very spirit of cordiality) "pardon me for my uncharitable laughter. You appeared so *utterly* astonished. Besides, some things are so completely ludicrous that a man *must* laugh, or die. To die laughing must be the most glorious of all glorious deaths! Sir Thomas More — a very fine man was Sir Thomas More — Sir Thomas More died laughing, you remember. Also in the "Absurdities" of Ravisius Textor there is a long list of characters who came to the same magnificent end. Do you know, however," continued he, musingly, "that at Sparta — which is now Palæochori — at Sparta, I say, to the west of the citadel, among a chaos of scarcely visible ruins, is a kind of *socle* upon which are still legible the letters ΛΑΣΜ. They are undoubtedly part of ΓΕΛΑΣΜΑ. Now, at Sparta were a thousand temples and shrines to a thousand different divinities. How exceedingly strange that the altar of Laughter should have survived all the others! But in the present instance," he resumed, with a singular alteration of voice and manner, "I have no right to be merry at your expense. You might well have been amazed. Europe cannot produce anything so fine as this, my little regal cabinet. My other apartments are by no means of the same order — mere *ultras* of fashionable insipidity. This is better than fashion, is it not? Yet this has but to be seen to become the rage — that is, with those who could afford it at the cost of their entire patrimony. I have guarded, however, against any such profanation. With one exception, you are the

only human being, besides myself and my valet, who has been admitted within the mysteries of these imperial precincts, since they have been bedizened as you see!"

I bowed in acknowledgment: for the overpowering sense of splendor and perfume and music, together with the unexpected eccentricity of his address and manner, prevented me from expressing, in words, my appreciation of what I might have construed into a compliment.

"Here," he resumed, arising and leaning on my arm as he sauntered around the apartment, — "here are paintings from the Greeks to Cimabue, and from Cimabue to the present hour. Many are chosen, as you see, with little deference to the opinions of Virtu. They are all, however, fitting tapestry for a chamber such as this. Here, too, are some *chefs d'œuvre* of the unknown great; and here, unfinished designs by men, celebrated in their day, whose very names the perspicacity of the academies has left to silence and to me. What think you," said he, turning abruptly as he spoke — "what think you of this Madonna della Pietà?"

"It is Guido's own!" I said, with all the enthusiasm of my nature, for I had been poring intently over its surpassing loveliness. "It is Guido's own! — how *could* you have obtained it? she is undoubtedly in painting what the Venus is in sculpture."

"Ha!" said he, thoughtfully, "the Venus — the beautiful Venus? — the Venus of the Medici? — she of the diminutive head and the gilded hair? Part of the left arm," (here his voice dropped so as to be heard with difficulty) "and all the right, are restorations; and in the coquetry of that right arm lies, I think, the

quintessence of all affectation. Give *me* the Canova! The Apollo, too, is a copy — there can be no doubt of it — blind fool that I am, who cannot behold the boasted inspiration of the Apollo! I cannot help — pity me! — I cannot help preferring the Antinous. Was it not Socrates who said that the statuary found his statue in the block of marble? Then Michel Angelo was by no means original in his couplet —

> 'Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto
> Chè un marmo solo in se non circonscriva.'"

It has been or should be remarked that, in the manner of the true gentleman, we are always aware of a difference from the bearing of the vulgar, without being at once precisely able to determine in what such difference consists. Allowing the remark to have applied in its full force to the outward demeanor of my acquaintance, I felt it, on that eventful morning, still more fully applicable to his moral temperament and character. Nor can I better define that peculiarity of spirit which seemed to place him so essentially apart from all other human beings, than by calling it a *habit* of intense and continual thought, pervading even his most trivial actions, intruding upon his moments of dalliance, and interweaving itself with his very flashes of merriment, like adders which writhe from out the eyes of the grinning masks in the cornices around the temples of Persepolis.

I could not help, however, repeatedly observing, through the mingled tone of levity and solemnity with which he rapidly descanted upon matters of little importance, a certain air of trepidation — a degree of nervous *unction* in action and in speech — an unquiet excitability of manner which appeared to me at all

times unaccountable, and upon some occasions even filled me with alarm. Frequently, too, pausing in the middle of a sentence whose commencement he had apparently forgotten, he seemed to be listening in the deepest attention, as if either in momentary expectation of a visitor, or to sounds which must have had existence in his imagination alone.

It was during one of these reveries or pauses of apparent abstraction, that, in turning over a page of the poet and scholar Politian's beautiful tragedy, the *Orfeo*, (the first native Italian tragedy) which lay near me upon an ottoman, I discovered a passage underlined in pencil. It was a passage towards the end of the third act — a passage of the most heart-stirring excitement — a passage which, although tainted with impurity, no man shall read without a thrill of novel emotion, no woman without a sigh. The whole page was blotted with fresh tears; and upon the opposite interleaf were the following English lines, written in a hand so very different from the peculiar characters of my acquaintance that I had some difficulty in recognizing it as his own: —

Thou wast all that to me, love,
For which my soul did pine:
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope, that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!" — but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute — motionless — aghast.

For alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er.
"No more — no more — no more;"—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar.

Now all my hours are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy gray eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams,
In what ethereal dances,
By what Italian streams.

Alas! for that accursed time
They bore thee o'er the billow,
From Love to titled age and crime,
And an unholy pillow:
From me, and from our misty clime
Where weeps the silver willow.

That these lines were written in English, a language with which I had not believed their author acquainted, afforded me little matter for surprise. I was too well aware of the extent of his acquirements, and of the singular pleasure he took in concealing them from observation, to be astonished at any similar discovery; but the place of date, I must confess, occasioned me no little amazement. It had been originally written *London*, and afterwards carefully overscored — not, however, so effectually as to conceal the word from a scrutinizing eye. I say, this occasioned me no little amazement; for I well remember that, in a former conversation with my friend, I particularly inquired if he had at any time met in London the Marchesa di Mentoni, (who for some years previous to her marriage had resided in that city) when his answer, if I mistake not,

gave me to understand that he had never visited the metropolis of Great Britain. I might as well here mention that I have more than once heard, (without, of course, giving credit to a report involving so many improbabilities) that the person of whom I speak was not only by birth, but in education, an *Englishman*.

. . . . . .

"There is one painting," said he, without being aware of my notice of the tragedy — "there is still one painting which you have not seen." And throwing aside a drapery, he discovered a full-length portrait of the Marchesa Aphrodite.

Human art could have done no more in the delineation of her superhuman beauty. The same ethereal figure which stood before me the preceding night, upon the steps of the Ducal Palace, stood before me once again. But in the expression of the countenance, which was beaming all over with smiles, there still lurked (incomprehensible anomaly !) that fitful stain of melancholy which will ever be found inseparable from the perfection of the beautiful. Her right arm lay folded over her bosom. With her left she pointed downward to a curiously fashioned vase. One small, fairy foot, alone visible, barely touched the earth; and, scarcely discernible in the brilliant atmosphere which seemed to encircle and enshrine her loveliness, floated a pair of the most delicately imagined wings. My glance fell from the painting to the figure of my friend, and the vigorous words of Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*, quivered instinctively upon my lips: —

"I am up
Here like a Roman statue; I will stand
Till death hath made me marble!"

"Come," he said at length, turning towards a table of richly enamelled and massive silver, upon which were a few goblets fantastically stained, together with two large Etruscan vases, fashioned in the same extraordinary model as that in the foreground of the portrait, and filled with what I supposed to be Johannisberger. "Come," he said abruptly, "let us drink! It is early — but let us drink. It is *indeed* early," he continued musingly, as a cherub with a heavy golden hammer made the apartment ring with the first hour after sunrise: "it is *indeed* early — but what matters it? let us drink! Let us pour out an offering to yon solemn sun which these gaudy lamps and censers are so eager to subdue!" And, having made me pledge him in a bumper, he swallowed in rapid succession several goblets of the wine.

"To dream," he continued, resuming the tone of his desultory conversation, as he held up to the rich light of a censer one of the magnificent vases — "to dream has been the business of my life. I have therefore framed for myself, as you see, a bower of dreams. In the heart of Venice could I have erected a better? You behold around you, it is true, a medley of architectural embellishments. The chastity of Ionia is offended by antediluvian devices, and the sphinxes of Egypt are outstretched upon carpets of gold. Yet the effect is incongruous to the timid alone. Proprieties of place, and especially of time, are the bugbears which terrify mankind from the contemplation of the magnificent. Once I was myself a decorist; but that sublimation of folly has palled upon my soul. All this is now the fitter for my purpose. Like these arabesque censers, my spirit is writhing in fire, and the delirium of this scene is fashioning me for the

wilder visions of that land of real dreams whither I am now rapidly departing." He here paused abruptly, bent his head to his bosom, and seemed to listen to a sound which I could not hear. At length, erecting his frame, he looked upwards, and ejaculated the lines of the Bishop of Chichester: —

> *"Stay for me there! I will not fail*
> *To meet thee in that hollow vale."*

In the next instant, confessing the power of the wine, he threw himself at full length upon an ottoman.

A quick step was now heard upon the staircase, and a loud knock at the door rapidly succeeded. I was hastening to anticipate a second disturbance, when a page of Mentoni's household burst into the room, and faltered out, in a voice choking with emotion, the incoherent words, "My mistress! — my mistress! — Poisoned! — poisoned! Oh, beautiful — oh, beautiful Aphrodite!"

Bewildered, I flew to the ottoman, and endeavored to arouse the sleeper to a sense of the startling intelligence. But his limbs were rigid — his lips were livid — his lately beaming eyes were riveted in *death.* I staggered back towards the table — my hand fell upon a cracked and blackened goblet — and a consciousness of the entire and terrible truth flashed suddenly over my soul.

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

(ROME)

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled — but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point — this Fortunato — although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity — to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian millionnaires. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack — but in the matter of old wines he was

sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him, "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me ——"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good-nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi ——"

"I have no engagement; — come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a roquelaire closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaus, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi ——"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True — true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily — but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough —"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement — a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said, "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said.

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my roquelaire.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and, descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaus rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull

torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi —"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key, I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato

had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaus over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated — I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed — I aided — I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad

voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said —

"Ha! ha! ha! — he! he! he! — a very good joke indeed — an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo — he! he! he! — over our wine — he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he! — he! he! he! — yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, — the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"*For the love of God, Montresor!*"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud —

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again —

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick — on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat.*

A TALE

OF

THE RAGGED MOUNTAINS

(INDIA)

DURING the fall of the year 1827, while residing near Charlottesville, Virginia, I casually made the acquaintance of Mr. Augustus Bedloe. This young gentleman was remarkable in every respect, and excited in me a profound interest and curiosity. I found it impossible to comprehend him either in his moral or his physical relations. Of his family I could obtain no satisfactory account. Whence he came, I never ascertained. Even about his age — although I call him a young gentleman — there was something which perplexed me in no little degree. He certainly *seemed* young — and he made a point of speaking about his youth — yet there were moments when I should have had little trouble in imagining him a hundred years of age. But in no regard was he more peculiar than in his personal appearance. He was singularly tall and thin. He stooped much. His limbs were exceedingly long and emaciated. His forehead was broad and low. His complexion was absolutely bloodless. His mouth was large and flexible, and his teeth were more wildly uneven, although

sound, than I had ever before seen teeth in a human head. The expression of his smile, however, was by no means unpleasing, as might be supposed; but it had no variation whatever. It was one of profound melancholy, of a phaseless and unceasing gloom. His eyes were abnormally large, and round like those of a cat. The pupils, too, upon any accession or diminution of light, underwent contraction or dilation, just such as is observed in the feline tribe. In moments of excitement the orbs grew bright to a degree almost inconceivable; seeming to emit luminous rays, not of a reflected, but of an intrinsic lustre, as does a candle or the sun; yet their ordinary condition was so totally vapid, filmy, and dull, as to convey the idea of the eyes of a long-interred corpse.

These peculiarities of person appeared to cause him much annoyance, and he was continually alluding to them in a sort of half explanatory, half apologetic strain, which, when I first heard it, impressed me very painfully. I soon, however, grew accustomed to it, and my uneasiness wore off. It seemed to be his design rather to insinuate than directly to assert that, physically, he had not always been what he was — that a long series of neuralgic attacks had reduced him from a condition of more than usual personal beauty to that which I saw. For many years past he had been attended by a physician, named Templeton — an old gentleman, perhaps seventy years of age — whom he had first encountered at Saratoga, and from whose attention, while there, he either received, or fancied that he received, great benefit. The result was that Bedloe, who was wealthy, had made an arrangement with Doctor Templeton, by which the latter, in consideration of a liberal annual allowance,

had consented to devote his time and medical experience exclusively to the care of the invalid.

Doctor Templeton had been a traveller in his younger days, and at Paris had become a convert, in great measure, to the doctrines of Mesmer. It was altogether by means of magnetic remedies that he had succeeded in alleviating the acute pains of his patient; and this success had very naturally inspired the latter with a certain degree of confidence in the opinions from which the remedies had been educed. The Doctor, however, like all enthusiasts, had struggled hard to make a thorough convert of his pupil, and finally so far gained his point as to induce the sufferer to submit to numerous experiments. By a frequent repetition of these a result had arisen, which of late days has become so common as to attract little or no attention, but which, at the period of which I write, had very rarely been known in America. I mean to say, that between Doctor Templeton and Bedloe there had grown up, little by little, a very distinct and strongly marked rapport, or magnetic relation. I am not prepared to assert, however, that this rapport extended beyond the limits of the simple sleep-producing power; but this power itself had attained great intensity. At the first attempt to induce the magnetic somnolency, the mesmerist entirely failed. In the fifth or sixth he succeeded very partially, and after long-continued effort. Only at the twelfth was the triumph complete. After this the will of the patient succumbed rapidly to that of the physician, so that, when I first became acquainted with the two, sleep was brought about almost instantaneously, by the mere volition of the operator, even when the invalid was unaware of his presence. It is only now, in the year 1845, when similar miracles

are witnessed daily by thousands, that I dare venture to record this apparent impossibility as a matter of serious fact.

The temperature of Bedloe was, in the highest degree, sensitive, excitable, enthusiastic. His imagination was singularly vigorous and creative; and no doubt it derived additional force from the habitual use of morphine, which he swallowed in great quantity, and without which he would have found it impossible to exist. It was his practice to take a very large dose of it immediately after breakfast, each morning — or rather immediately after a cup of strong coffee, for he ate nothing in the forenoon — and then set forth alone, or attended only by a dog, upon a long ramble among the chain of wild and dreary hills that lie westward and southward of Charlottesville, and are there dignified by the title of the Ragged Mountains.

Upon a dim, warm, misty day, towards the close of November, and during the strange interregnum of the seasons which in America is termed the Indian Summer, Mr. Bedloe departed as usual for the hills. The day passed, and still he did not return.

About eight o'clock at night, having become seriously alarmed at his protracted absence, we were about setting out in search of him, when he unexpectedly made his appearance, in health no worse than usual, and in rather more than ordinary spirits. The account which he gave of his expedition, and of the events which had detained him, was a singular one indeed.

"You will remember," said he, "that it was about nine in the morning when I left Charlottesville. I bent my steps immediately to the mountains, and, about ten, entered a gorge which was entirely new to

me. I followed the windings of this pass with much interest. The scenery which presented itself on all sides, although scarcely entitled to be called grand, had about it an indescribable and, to me, a delicious aspect of dreary desolation. The solitude seemed absolutely virgin. I could not help believing that the green sods and the gray rocks upon which I trod had been trodden never before by the foot of a human being. So entirely secluded, and in fact inaccessible, except through a series of accidents, is the entrance of the ravine, that it is by no means impossible that I was indeed the first adventurer — the very first and sole adventurer who had ever penetrated its recesses.

"The thick and peculiar mist, or smoke, which distinguishes the Indian Summer, and which now hung heavily over all objects, served, no doubt, to deepen the vague impressions which these objects created. So dense was this pleasant fog, that I could at no time see more than a dozen yards of the path before me. This path was excessively sinuous, and as the sun could not be seen, I soon lost all idea of the direction in which I journeyed. In the mean time the morphine had its customary effect — that of enduing all the external world with an intensity of interest. I . the quivering of a leaf, in the hue of a blade of grass, in the shape of a trefoil, in the humming of a bee, in the gleaming of a dewdrop, in the breathing of the wind, in the faint odors that came from the forest, there came a whole universe of suggestion — a gay and motley train of rhapsodical and immethodical thought.

"Busied in this, I walked on for several hours, during which the mist deepened around me to so great an extent that at length I was reduced to an absolute

groping of the way. And now an indescribable uneasiness possessed me — a species of nervous hesitation and tremor. I feared to tread, lest I should be precipitated into some abyss. I remembered, too, strange stories told about these Ragged Hills, and of the uncouth and fierce races of men who tenanted their groves and caverns. A thousand vague fancies oppressed and disconcerted me: fancies the more distressing because vague. Very suddenly my attention was arrested by the loud beating of a drum.

"My amazement was, of course, extreme. A drum in these hills was a thing unknown. I could not have been more surprised at the sound of the trump of the Archangel. But a new and still more astounding source of interest and perplexity arose. There came a wild rattling or jingling sound, as if of a bunch of large keys — and upon the instant a dusky-visaged and half-naked man rushed past me with a shriek. He came so close to my person that I felt his hot breath upon my face. He bore in one hand an instrument composed of an assemblage of steel rings, and shook them vigorously as he ran. Scarcely had he disappeared in the mist, before, panting after him, with open mouth and glaring eyes, there darted a huge beast. I could not be mistaken in its character. It was a hyena.

"The sight of this monster rather relieved than heightened my terrors; for I now made sure that I dreamed, and endeavored to arouse myself to waking consciousness. I stepped boldly and briskly forward. I rubbed my eyes. I called aloud. I pinched my limbs. A small spring of water presented itself to my view, and here, stooping, I bathed my hands and my head and neck. This seemed to dissipate the

equivocal sensations which had hitherto annoyed me. I arose, as I thought, a new man, and proceeded steadily and complacently on my unknown way.

"At length, quite overcome by exertion, and by a certain oppressive closeness of the atmosphere, I seated myself beneath a tree. Presently there came a feeble gleam of sunshine, and the shadow of the leaves of the tree fell faintly but definitely upon the grass. At this shadow I gazed wonderingly for many minutes. Its character stupefied me with astonishment. I looked upward. The tree was a palm.

"I now arose hurriedly, and in a state of fearful agitation — for the fancy that I dreamed would serve me no longer. I saw — I felt that I had perfect command of my senses — and these senses now brought to my soul a world of novel and singular sensation. The heat became all at once intolerable. A strange odor loaded the breeze. A low, continuous murmur, like that arising from a full, but gently flowing river, came to my ears, intermingled with the peculiar hum of multitudinous human voices.

"While I listened in an extremity of astonishment which I need not attempt to describe, a strong and brief gust of wind bore off the incumbent fog as if by the wand of an enchanter.

"I found myself at the foot of a high mountain, and looking down into a vast plain, through which wound a majestic river. On the margin of this river stood an Eastern-looking city, such as we read of in the Arabian Tales, but of a character even more singular than any there described. From my position, which was far above the level of the town, I could perceive its every nook and corner, as if delineated on a map. The streets seemed innumerable, and crossed

each other irregularly in all directions, but were rather long winding alleys than streets, and absolutely swarmed with inhabitants. The houses were wildly picturesque. On every hand was a wilderness of balconies, of verandas, of minarets, of shrines, and fantastically carved oriels. Bazaars abounded; and in these were displayed rich wares in infinite variety and profusion — silks, muslins, the most dazzling cutlery, the most magnificent jewels and gems. Besides these things, were seen, on all sides, banners and palanquins, litters with stately dames close veiled, elephants gorgeously caparisoned, idols grotesquely hewn, drums, banners and gongs, spears, silver and gilded maces. And amid the crowd, and the clamor, and the general intricacy and confusion — amid the million of black and yellow men, turbaned and robed, and of flowing beard, there roamed a countless multitude of holy filleted bulls, while vast legions of the filthy but sacred ape clambered, chattering and shrieking, about the cornices of the mosques, or clung to the minarets and oriels. From the swarming streets to the banks of the river, there descended innumerable flights of steps leading to bathing places, while the river itself seemed to force a passage with difficulty through the vast fleets of deeply-burdened ships that far and wide encountered its surface. Beyond the limits of the city arose, in frequent majestic groups, the palm and the cocoa, with other gigantic and weird trees of vast age; and here and there might be seen a field of rice, the thatched hut of a peasant, a tank, a stray temple, a gypsy camp, or a solitary graceful maiden taking her way, with a pitcher upon her head, to the banks of the magnificent river.

"You will say now, of course, that I dreamed; but

not so. What I saw — what I heard — what I felt — what I thought — had about it nothing of the unmistakable idiosyncrasy of the dream. All was rigorously self-consistent. At first, doubting that I was really awake, I entered into a series of tests, which soon convinced me that I really was. Now, when one dreams, and, in the dream, suspects that he dreams, the suspicion *never fails to confirm itself*, and the sleeper is almost immediately aroused. Thus Novalis errs not in saying that 'we are near waking when we dream that we dream.' Had the vision occurred to me as I describe it, without my suspecting it as a dream, then a dream it might absolutely have been, but, occurring as it did, and suspected and tested as it was, I am forced to class it among other phenomena."

"In this I am not sure that you are wrong," observed Dr. Templeton, "but proceed. You arose and descended into the city."

"I arose," continued Bedloe, regarding the Doctor with an air of profound astonishment, "I arose, as you say, and descended into the city. On my way, I fell in with an immense populace, crowding through every avenue, all in the same direction, and exhibiting in every action the wildest excitement. Very suddenly, and by some inconceivable impulse, I became intensely imbued with personal interest in what was going on. I seemed to feel that I had an important part to play, without exactly understanding what it was. Against the crowd which environed me, however, I experienced a deep sentiment of animosity. I shrank from amid them, and, swiftly, by a circuitous path, reached and entered the city. Here all was the wildest tumult and contention. A small party of men, clad in garments half Indian, half European, and officered by gentle-

men in a uniform partly British, were engaged, at great odds, with the swarming rabble of the alleys. I joined the weaker party, arming myself with the weapons of a fallen officer, and fighting I knew not whom with the nervous ferocity of despair. We were soon overpowered by numbers, and driven to seek refuge in a species of kiosk. Here we barricaded ourselves, and, for the present, were secure. From a loop-hole near the summit of the kiosk, I perceived a vast crowd, in furious agitation, surrounding and assaulting a gay palace that overhung the river. Presently, from an upper window of this palace, there descended an effeminate-looking person, by means of a string made of the turbans of his attendants. A boat was at hand, in which he escaped to the opposite bank of the river.

"And now a new object took possession of my soul. I spoke a few hurried but energetic words to my companions, and, having succeeded in gaining over a few of them to my purpose, made a frantic sally from the kiosk. We rushed amid the crowd that surrounded it. They retreated, at first, before us. They rallied, fought madly, and retreated again. In the mean time we were borne far from the kiosk, and became bewildered and entangled among the narrow streets of tall overhanging houses, into the recesses of which the sun had never been able to shine. The rabble pressed impetuously upon us, harassing us with their spears and overwhelming us with flights of arrows. These latter were very remarkable, and resembled in some respects the writhing creese of the Malay. They were made to imitate the body of a creeping serpent, and were long and black, with a poisoned barb. One of them struck me upon the right temple. I reeled and fell.

An instantaneous and dreadful sickness seized me. I struggled — I gasped — I died."

"You will hardly persist *now*," said I, smiling, "that the whole of your adventure was not a dream. You are not prepared to maintain that you are dead?"

When I said these words, I of course expected some lively sally from Bedloe in reply; but, to my astonishment, he hesitated, trembled, became fearfully pallid, and remained silent. I looked towards Templeton. He sat erect and rigid in his chair — his teeth chattered, and his eyes were starting from their sockets. "Proceed!" he at length said hoarsely to Bedloe.

"For many minutes," continued the latter, "my sole sentiment — my sole feeling — was that of darkness and nonentity, with the consciousness of death. At length, there seemed to pass a violent and sudden shock through my soul, as if of electricity. With it came the sense of elasticity and of light. This latter I felt — not saw. In an instant I seemed to rise from the ground. But I had no bodily, no visible, audible, or palpable presence. The crowd had departed. The tumult had ceased. The city was in comparative repose. Beneath me lay my corpse, with the arrow in my temple, the whole head greatly swollen and disfigured. But all these things I felt — not saw. I took interest in nothing. Even the corpse seemed a matter in which I had no concern. Volition I had none, but appeared to be impelled into motion, and flitted buoyantly out of the city, retracing the circuitous path by which I had entered it. When I had attained that point of the ravine in the mountains, at which I had encountered the hyena, I again experienced a shock as of a galvanic battery; the sense of weight, of voli-

tion, of substance, returned. I became my original self, and bent my steps eagerly homewards — but the past had not lost the vividness of the real — and not now, even for an instant, can I compel my understanding to regard it as a dream."

"Nor was it," said Templeton, with an air of deep solemnity, "yet it would be difficult to say how otherwise it should be termed. Let us suppose only, that the soul of the man of to-day is upon the verge of some stupendous psychal discoveries. Let us content ourselves with this supposition. For the rest, I have some explanation to make. Here is a water-color drawing, which I should have shown you before, but which an unaccountable sentiment of horror has hitherto prevented me from showing."

We looked at the picture which he presented. I saw nothing in it of an extraordinary character; but its effect upon Bedloe was prodigious. He nearly fainted as he gazed. And yet it was but a miniature portrait — a miraculously accurate one, to be sure — of his own very remarkable features. At least this was my thought as I regarded it.

"You will perceive," said Templeton, "the date of this picture — it is here, scarcely visible, in this corner — 1780. In this year was the portrait taken. It is the likeness of a dead friend, a Mr. Oldeb, to whom I became much attached at Calcutta, during the administration of Warren Hastings. I was then only twenty years old. When I first saw you, Mr. Bedloe, at Saratoga, it was the miraculous similarity which existed between yourself and the painting, which induced me to accost you, to seek your friendship, and to bring about those arrangements which resulted in my becoming your constant companion. In accomplish-

ing this point, I was urged partly, and perhaps principally, by a regretful memory of the deceased, but also, in part, by an uneasy, and not altogether horrorless curiosity respecting yourself.

"In your detail of the vision which presented itself to you amid the hills, you have described, with the minutest accuracy, the Indian city of Benares, upon the Holy River. The riots, the combats, the massacre, were the actual events of the insurrection of Cheyte Sing, which took place in 1780, when Hastings was put in imminent peril of his life. The man escaping by the string of turbans was Cheyte Sing himself. The party in the kiosk were Sepoys and British officers, headed by Hastings. Of this party I was one, and did all I could to prevent the rash and fatal sally of the officer who fell, in the crowded alleys, by the poisoned arrow of a Bengalee. That officer was my dearest friend. It was Oldeb. You will perceive by these manuscripts" (here the speaker produced a notebook in which several pages appeared to have been freshly written) "that at the very period in which you fancied these things amid the hills, I was engaged in detailing them upon paper here at home."

In about a week after this conversation, the following paragraphs appeared in a Charlottesville paper:

"We have the painful duty of announcing the death of Mr. AUGUSTUS BEDLO, a gentleman whose amiable manners and many virtues have long endeared him to the citizens of Charlottesville.

"Mr. B., for some years past, has been subject to neuralgia, which has often threatened to terminate fatally; but this can be regarded only as the mediate cause of his decease. The proximate cause was one of especial singularity. In an excursion to the Ragged Mountains, a few

days since, a slight cold and fever were contracted, attended with great determination of blood to the head. To relieve this, Dr. Templeton resorted to topical bleeding. Leeches were applied to the temples. In a fearfully brief period the patient died, when it appeared that, in the jar containing the leeches, had been introduced, by accident, one of the venomous vermicular sangsues which are now and then found in the neighboring ponds. This creature fastened itself upon a small artery in the right temple. Its close resemblance to the medicinal leech caused the mistake to be overlooked until too late.

"N. B. The poisonous sangsue of Charlottesville may always be distinguished from the medicinal leech by its blackness, and especially by its writhing or vermicular motions, which very nearly resemble those of a snake."

I was speaking with the editor of the paper in question, upon the topic of this remarkable accident, when it occurred to me to ask how it happened that the name of the deceased had been given as Bedlo.

'I presume," said I, "you have authority for this spelling, but I have always supposed the name to be written with an *e* at the end."

"Authority? — no," he replied. "It is a mere typographical error. The name is Bedlo with an *e* all the world over, and I never knew it to be spelt otherwise in my life."

"Then," said I mutteringly, as I turned upon my heel, "then indeed has it come to pass that one truth is stranger than any fiction — for Bedlo, without the *e*, what is it but Oldeb conversed? And this man tells me it is a typographical error."

METZENGERSTEIN

(HUNGARY)

Pestis eram vivus — moriens tua mors ero.
MARTIN LUTHER.

HORROR and fatality have been stalking abroad in all ages. Why then give a date to the story I have to tell? Let it suffice to say that, at the period of which I speak, there existed, in the interior of Hungary, a settled although hidden belief in the doctrines of the Metempsychosis. Of the doctrines themselves — that is, of their falsity, or of their probability — I say nothing. I assert, however, that much of our incredulity (as La Bruyère says of all our unhappiness) "*vient de ne pouvoir être seul.*"[1]

But there were some points in the Hungarian superstition which were fast verging to absurdity. They — the Hungarians — differed very essentially from their Eastern authorities. For example, "*The soul*," said the former — I give the words of an acute and intelligent Parisian — "*ne demeure qu'une seule fois dans un corps sensible: au reste — un cheval, un chien, un homme même, n'est que la ressemblance peu iangible de ces animaux.*"

[1] Mercier, in *L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante*, seriously maintains the doctrines of the Metempsychosis, and J. D'Israeli says that "no system is so simple and so little repugnant to the understanding." Colonel Ethan Allen, the "Green Mountain Boy," is also said to have been a serious metempsychosist.

The families of Berlifitzing and Metzengerstein had been at variance for centuries. Never before were two houses so illustrious, mutually embittered by hostility so deadly. The origin of this enmity seems to be found in the words of an ancient prophecy — "A lofty name shall have a fearful fall when, as the rider over his horse, the mortality of Metzengerstein shall triumph over the immortality of Berlifitzing."

To be sure, the words themselves had little or no meaning. But more trivial causes have given rise — and that no long while ago — to consequences equally eventful. Besides, the estates, which were contiguous, had long exercised a rival influence in the affairs of a busy government. Moreover, near neighbors are seldom friends; and the inhabitants of the Castle Berlifitzing might look, from their lofty buttresses, into the very windows of the Palace Metzengerstein. Least of all had the more than feudal magnificence thus discovered a tendency to allay the irritable feelings of the less ancient and less wealthy Berlifitzings. What wonder, then, that the words, however silly, of that prediction should have succeeded in setting and keeping at variance two families already predisposed to quarrel by every instigation of hereditary jealousy? The prophecy seemed to imply — if it implied anything — a final triumph on the part of the already more powerful house, and was of course remembered with the more bitter animosity by the weaker and less influential.

Wilhelm, Count Berlifitzing, although loftily descended, was, at the epoch of this narrative, an infirm and doting old man, remarkable for nothing but an inordinate and inveterate personal antipathy to the family of his rival, and so passionate a love of horses

and of hunting, that neither bodily infirmity, great age, nor mental incapacity prevented his daily participation in the dangers of the chase.

Frederick, Baron Metzengerstein, was, on the other hand, not yet of age. His father, the Minister G——, died young. His mother, the Lady Mary, followed him quickly. Frederick was, at that time, in his eighteenth year. In a city eighteen years are no long period; but in a wilderness, in so magnificent a wilderness as that old principality, the pendulum vibrates with a deeper meaning.

From some peculiar circumstances attending the administration of his father, the young Baron, at the decease of the former, entered immediately upon his vast possessions. Such estates were seldom held before by a nobleman of Hungary. His castles were without number. The chief in point of splendor and extent was the "Palace Metzengerstein." The boundary line of his dominions was never clearly defined; but his principal park embraced a circuit of fifty miles.

Upon the succession of a proprietor so young, with a character so well known, to a fortune so unparalleled, little speculation was afloat in regard to his probable course of conduct. And indeed, for the space of three days, the behavior of the heir out-Heroded Herod, and fairly surpassed the expectations of his most enthusiastic admirers. Shameful debaucheries, flagrant treacheries, unheard-of atrocities, gave his trembling vassals quickly to understand that no servile submission on their part, no punctilios of conscience on his own, were thenceforward to prove any security against the remorseless fangs of a petty Caligula. On the night of the fourth day the stables of the Castle Berlifitzing were discovered to be on fire;

and the unanimous opinion of the neighborhood added the crime of the incendiary to the already hideous list of the Baron's misdemeanors and enormities.

But during the tumult occasioned by this occurrence the young nobleman himself sat apparently buried in meditation, in a vast and desolate upper apartment of the family palace of Metzengerstein. The rich although faded tapestry hangings which swung gloomily upon the walls, represented the shadowy and majestic forms of a thousand illustrious ancestors. *Here*, richermined priests and pontifical dignitaries, familiarly seated with the autocrat and the sovereign, put a veto on the wishes of a temporal king or restrained with the fiat of papal supremacy the rebellious sceptre of the Arch-Enemy. *There*, the dark, tall statures of the Princes Metzengerstein — their muscular war-coursers plunging over the carcasses of fallen foes — startled the steadiest nerves with their vigorous expression; and *here*, again, the voluptuous and swan-like figures of the dames of days gone by floated away in the mazes of an unreal dance to the strains of imaginary melody.

But as the Baron listened, or affected to listen, to the gradually increasing uproar in the stables of Berlifitzing, — or perhaps pondered upon some more novel, some more decided act of audacity, — his eyes were turned unwittingly to the figure of an enormous, and unnaturally colored horse, represented in the tapestry as belonging to a Saracen ancestor of the family of his rival. The horse itself, in the foreground of the design, stood motionless and statue-like — while, farther back, its discomfited rider perished by the dagger of a Metzengerstein.

On Frederick's lip arose a fiendish expression, as

he became aware of the direction which his glance had, without his consciousness, assumed. Yet he did not remove it. On the contrary, he could by no means account for the overwhelming anxiety which appeared falling like a pall upon his senses. It was with difficulty that he reconciled his dreamy and incoherent feelings with the certainty of being awake. The longer he gazed, the more absorbing became the spell — the more impossible did it appear that he could ever withdraw his glance from the fascination of that tapestry. But the tumult without becoming suddenly more violent, with a compulsory exertion he diverted his attention to the glare of ruddy light thrown full by the flaming stables upon the windows of the apartment.

The action, however, was but momentary; his gaze returned mechanically to the wall. To his extreme horror and astonishment, the head of the gigantic steed had, in the mean time, altered its position. The neck of the animal, before arched, as if in compassion, over the prostrate body of its lord, was now extended, at full length, in the direction of the Baron. The eyes, before invisible, now wore an energetic and human expression, while they gleamed with a fiery and unusual red; and the distended lips of the apparently enraged horse left in full view his sepulchral and disgusting teeth.

Stupefied with terror, the young nobleman tottered to the door. As he threw it open, a flash of red light, streaming far into the chamber, flung his shadow with a clear outline against the quivering tapestry; and he shuddered to perceive that shadow — as he staggered awhile upon the threshold — assuming the exact position, and precisely filling up the contour, of the

relentless and triumphant murderer of the Saracen Berlifitzing.

To lighten the depression of his spirits, the Baron hurried into the open air. At the principal gate of the palace he encountered three equerries. With much difficulty, and at the imminent peril of their lives, they were restraining the convulsive plunges of a gigantic and fiery-colored horse.

"Whose horse? Where did you get him?" demanded the youth, in a querulous and husky tone, as he became instantly aware that the mysterious steed in the tapestried chamber was the very counterpart of the furious animal before his eyes.

"He is your own property, sire," replied one of the equerries, "at least he is claimed by no other owner. We caught him flying, all smoking and foaming with rage, from the burning stables of the Castle Berlifitzing. Supposing him to have belonged to the old Count's stud of foreign horses, we led him back as an estray. But the grooms there disclaim any title to the creature; which is strange, since he bears evident marks of having made a narrow escape from the flames."

"The letters W. V. B. are also branded very distinctly on his forehead," interrupted a second equerry; "I supposed them, of course, to be the initials of Wilhelm Von Berlifitzing — but all at the castle are positive in denying any knowledge of the horse."

"Extremely singular!" said the young Baron, with a musing air, and apparently unconscious of the meaning of his words. "He is, as you say, a remarkable horse, — a prodigious horse! although, as you very justly observe, of a suspicious and untractable character; let him be mine, however," he added, after a

pause, "perhaps a rider like Frederick of Metzengerstein may tame even the devil from the stables of Berlifitzing."

"You are mistaken, my lord; the horse, as I think we mentioned, is *not* from the stables of the Count. If such had been the case, we know our duty better than to bring him into the presence of a noble of your family."

"True!" observed the Baron, dryly; and at that instant a page of the bed-chamber came from the palace with a heightened color, and a precipitate step. He whispered into his master's ear an account of the sudden disappearance of a small portion of the tapestry, in an apartment which he designated, entering, at the same time, into particulars of a minute and circumstantial character; but, from the low tone of voice in which these latter were communicated, nothing escaped to gratify the excited curiosity of the equerries.

The young Frederick, during the conference, seemed agitated by a variety of emotions. He soon, however, recovered his composure, and an expression of determined malignancy settled upon his countenance, as he gave peremptory orders that the apartment in question should be immediately locked up, and the key placed in his own possession.

"Have you heard of the unhappy death of the old hunter Berlifitzing?" said one of his vassals to the Baron, as, after the departure of the page, the huge steed which that nobleman had adopted as his own plunged and curveted, with redoubled fury, down the long avenue which extended from the palace to the stables of Metzengerstein.

"No!" said the Baron, turning abruptly towards the speaker, "dead! say you?"

"It is indeed true, my lord; and, to the noble of your name, will be, I imagine, no unwelcome intelligence."

A rapid smile shot over the countenance of the listener. "How died he?"

"In his rash exertions to rescue a favorite portion of his hunting-stud he has himself perished miserably in the flames."

"I—n—d—e—e—d—!" ejaculated the Baron, as if slowly and deliberately impressed with the truth of some exciting idea.

"Indeed," repeated the vassal.

"Shocking!" said the youth, calmly, and turned quietly into the palace.

From this date a marked alteration took place in the outward demeanor of the dissolute young Baron Frederick Von Metzengerstein. Indeed, his behavior disappointed every expectation, and proved little in accordance with the views of many a manœuvring mamma; while his habits and manners, still less than formerly, offered anything congenial with those of the neighboring aristocracy. He was never to be seen beyond the limits of his own domain, and, in this wide and social world, was utterly companionless,—unless, indeed, that unnatural, impetuous, and fiery-colored horse, which he henceforward continually bestrode, had any mysterious right to the title of his friend.

Numerous invitations on the part of the neighborhood for a long time, however, periodically came in. "Will the Baron honor our festivals with his presence?" "Will the Baron join us in a hunting of the boar?"—"Metzengerstein does not hunt;" "Met-

zengerstein will not attend," were the haughty and laconic answers.

These repeated insults were not to be endured by an imperious nobility. Such invitations became less cordial, less frequent; in time they ceased altogether. The widow of the unfortunate Count Berlifitzing was even heard to express a hope "that the Baron might be at home when he did not wish to be at home, since he disdained the company of his equals; and ride when he did not wish to ride, since he preferred the society of a horse." This, to be sure, was a very silly explosion of hereditary pique; and merely proved how singularly unmeaning our sayings are apt to become, when we desire to be unusually energetic.

The charitable, nevertheless, attributed the alteration in the conduct of the young nobleman to the natural sorrow of a son for the untimely loss of his parents; forgetting, however, his atrocious and reckless behavior during the short period immediately succeeding that bereavement. Some there were, indeed, who suggested a too haughty idea of self-consequence and dignity. Others again (among whom may be mentioned the family physician) did not hesitate in speaking of morbid melancholy and hereditary ill-health; while dark hints, of a more equivocal nature, were current among the multitude.

Indeed, the Baron's perverse attachment to his lately-acquired charger — an attachment which seemed to attain new strength from every fresh example of the animal's ferocious and demon-like propensities — at length became, in the eyes of all reasonable men, a hideous and unnatural fervor. In the glare of noon, at the dead hour of night, in sickness or in health, in calm or in tempest, the young Metzengerstein

seemed riveted to the saddle of that colossal horse, whose intractable audacities so well accorded with his own spirit.

There were circumstances, moreover, which, coupled with late events, gave an unearthly and portentous character to the mania of the rider and to the capabilities of the steed. The space passed over in a single leap had been accurately measured, and was found to exceed, by an astounding difference, the wildest expectations of the most imaginative. The Baron, besides, had no particular *name* for the animal, although all the rest in his collection were distinguished by characteristic appellations. His stable, too, was appointed at a distance from the rest; and with regard to grooming and other necessary offices, none but the owner in person had ventured to officiate, or even to enter the enclosure of that horse's particular stall. It was also to be observed that, although the three grooms, who had caught the steed as he fled from the conflagration at Berlifitzing, had succeeded in arresting his course, by means of a chain-bridle and noose — yet no one of the three could with any certainty affirm that he had, during that dangerous struggle or at any period thereafter, actually placed his hand upon the body of the beast. Instances of peculiar intelligence in the demeanor of a noble and high-spirited horse are not to be supposed capable of exciting unreasonable attention, but there were certain circumstances which intruded themselves perforce upon the most sceptical and phlegmatic; and it is said there were times when the animal caused the gaping crowd who stood around to recoil in horror from the deep and impressive meaning of his terrible stamp — times when the young Metzengerstein turned

pale and shrunk away from the rapid and searching expression of his earnest and human-looking eye.

Among all the retinue of the Baron, however, none were found to doubt the ardor of that extraordinary affection which existed on the part of the young nobleman for the fiery qualities of his horse; at least, none but an insignificant and misshapen little page, whose deformities were in everybody's way, and whose opinions were of the least possible importance. He (if his ideas are worth mentioning at all) had the effrontery to assert that his master never vaulted into the saddle without an unaccountable and almost imperceptible shudder; and that, upon his return from every long-continued and habitual ride, an expression of triumphant malignity distorted every muscle in his countenance.

One tempestuous night, Metzengerstein, awaking from heavy slumber, descended like a maniac from his chamber, and, mounting in hot haste, bounded away into the mazes of the forest. An occurrence so common attracted no particular attention, but his return was looked for with intense anxiety on the part of his domestics, when, after some hours' absence, the stupendous and magnificent battlements of the Palace Metzengerstein were discovered crackling and rocking to their very foundation, under the influence of a dense and livid mass of ungovernable fire.

As the flames, when first seen, had already made so terrible a progress that all efforts to save any portion of the building were evidently futile, the astonished neighborhood stood idly around in silent, if not apathetic wonder. But a new and fearful object soon riveted the attention of the multitude and proved how much more intense is the excitement wrought in the

feelings of a crowd by the contemplation of human agony than that brought about by the most appalling spectacles of inanimate matter.

Up the long avenue of aged oaks, which led from the forest to the main entrance of the Palace Metzengerstein, a steed, bearing an unbonneted and disordered rider, was seen leaping with an impetuosity which outstripped the very Demon of the Tempest.

The career of the horseman was indisputably, on his own part, uncontrollable. The agony of his countenance, the convulsive struggle of his frame, gave evidence of superhuman exertion; but no sound, save a solitary shriek, escaped from his lacerated lips, which were bitten through and through in the intensity of terror. One instant, and the clattering of hoofs resounded sharply and shrilly above the roaring of the flames and the shrieking of the winds — another, and, clearing at a single plunge the gateway and the moat, the steed bounded far up the tottering staircases of the palace, and, with its rider, disappeared amid the whirlwind of chaotic fire.

The fury of the tempest immediately died away, and a dead calm sullenly succeeded. A white flame still enveloped the building like a shroud, and, streaming far away into the quiet atmosphere, shot forth a glare of preternatural light; while a cloud of smoke settled heavily over the battlements in the distinct colossal figure of — *a horse*.

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

(SPAIN)

Impia tortorum longas hic turba furores
Sanguinis innocui, non satiata, aluit.
Sospite nunc patria, fracto nunc funeris antro,
Mors ubi dira fuit vita salusque patent.

Quatrain composed for the gates of a market to be erected upon the site of the Jacobin Club House at Paris.

I WAS sick — sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence — the dread sentence of death — was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears. After that, the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreamy indeterminate hum. It conveyed to my soul the idea of *revolution*, perhaps from its association in fancy with the burr of a mill-wheel. This only for a brief period; for presently I heard no more. Yet, for a while, I saw; but with how terrible an exaggeration! I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me white, whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words, and thin even to grotesqueness; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness, — of immovable resolution, of stern contempt of human torture. I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name;

and I shuddered because no sound succeeded. I saw, too, for a few moments of delirious horror, the soft and nearly imperceptible waving of the sable draperies which enwrapped the walls of the apartment. And then my vision fell upon the seven tall candles upon the table. At first they wore the aspect of charity, and seemed white slender angels who would save me; but then, all at once, there came a most deadly nausea over my spirit, and I felt every fibre in my frame thrill as if I had touched the wire of a galvanic battery, while the angel forms became meaningless spectres, with heads of flame, and I saw that from them there would be no help. And then there stole into my fancy, like a rich musical note, the thought of what sweet rest there must be in the grave. The thought came gently and stealthily, and it seemed long before it attained full appreciation; but just as my spirit came at length properly to feel and entertain it, the figures of the judges vanished, as if magically, from before me; the tall candles sank into nothingness; their flames went out utterly; the blackness of darkness supervened; all sensations appeared swallowed up in a mad rushing descent as of the soul into Hades. Then silence, and stillness, and night were the universe.

I had swooned; but still will not say that all of consciousness was lost. What of it there remained I will not attempt to define, or even to describe; yet all was not lost. In the deepest slumber — no! In delirium — no! In a swoon — no! In death — no! even in the grave all is not lost. Else there is no immortality for man. Arousing from the most profound of slumbers, we break the gossamer web of *some* dream. Yet in a second afterward (so frail may that web have

been) we remember not that we have dreamed. In the return to life from the swoon there are two stages: first, that of the sense of mental or spiritual, secondly, that of the sense of physical, existence. It seems probable that if, upon reaching the second stage, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. And that gulf is — what? How at least shall we distinguish its shadows from those of the tomb? But if the impressions of what I have termed the first stage are not at will recalled, yet, after a long interval, do they not come unbidden, while we marvel whence they come? He who has never swooned is not he who finds strange palaces and wildly familiar faces in coals that glow; is not he who beholds floating in mid-air the sad visions that the many may not view; is not he who ponders over the perfume of some novel flower; is not he whose brain grows bewildered with the meaning of some musical cadence which has never before arrested his attention.

Amid frequent and thoughtful endeavors to remember, amid earnest struggles to regather some token of the state of seeming nothingness into which my soul had lapsed, there have been moments when I have dreamed of success; there have been brief, very brief periods when I have conjured up remembrances which the lucid reason of a later epoch assures me could have had reference only to that condition of seeming unconsciousness. These shadows of memory tell, indistinctly, of tall figures that lifted and bore me in silence down — down — still down — till a hideous dizziness oppressed me at the mere idea of the interminableness of the descent. They tell also of a vague horror at my heart, on account of that heart's unnatu-

ral stillness. Then comes a sense of sudden motionlessness throughout all things; as if those who bore me (a ghastly train!) had outrun in their descent the limits of the limitless, and paused from the wearisomeness of their toil. After this I call to mind flatness and dampness; and then all is *madness* — the madness of a memory which busies itself among forbidden things.

Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound — the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch — a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the mere consciousness of existence, without thought — a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, *thought*, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavor to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility. Then a rushing revival of soul and a successful effort to move. And now a full memory of the trial, of the judges, of the sable draperies, of the sentence, of the sickness, of the swoon. Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed; of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavor have enabled me vaguely to recall.

So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and *what* I could be. I longed yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be *nothing* to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my

eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition. The sentence had passed; and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence;—but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the *autos-da-fé*, and one of these had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This I at once saw could not be. Victims had been in immediate demand. Moreover, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and for a brief period I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I at once started to my feet, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing; yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a *tomb*. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets, in the hope of catching

some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces; but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there came thronging upon my recollection a thousand vague rumors of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated — fables I had always deemed them — but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat, save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode and the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

My outstretched hands at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry — very smooth, slimy, and cold. I followed it up; stepping with all the careful distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon; as I might make its circuit, and return to the point whence I set out, without being aware of the fact, so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife which had been in my pocket when led into the inquisitorial chamber; but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although, in the disorder of my fancy, it seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem from the robe and placed the

fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way around the prison I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit. So, at least, I thought; but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate; and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.

Upon awaking, and stretching forth an arm, I found beside me a loaf and a pitcher with water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterward, I resumed my tour around the prison, and with much toil came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell, I had counted fifty-two paces, and, upon resuming my walk, I had counted forty-eight more — when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and, admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault; for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

I had little object — certainly no hope — in these researches; but a vague curiosity prompted me to continue them. Quitting the wall, I resolved to cross the area of the enclosure. At first, I proceeded with extreme caution, for the floor, although seemingly of solid material, was treacherous with slime. At length, however, I took courage, and did not hesitate to step firmly — endeavoring to cross in as direct a line as possible. I had advanced some ten or twelve paces in this manner, when the remnant of the torn hem

of my robe became entangled between my legs. I stepped on it and fell violently on my face.

In the confusion attending my fall, I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance, which yet, in a few seconds afterward, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: my chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips and the upper portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. At the same time, my forehead seemed bathed in a clammy vapor, and the peculiar smell of decayed fungus arose to my nostrils. I put forward my arm, and shuddered to find that I had fallen at the very brink of a circular pit, whose extent, of course, I had no means of ascertaining at the moment. Groping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small fragment, and let it fall into the abyss. For many seconds I hearkened to its reverberations as it dashed against the sides of the chasm in its descent; at length, there was a sullen plunge into water, succeeded by loud echoes. At the same moment there came a sound resembling the quick opening and as rapid closing of a door overhead, while a faint gleam of light flashed suddenly through the gloom, and as suddenly faded away.

I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me, and congratulated myself upon the timely accident by which I had escaped. Another step before my fall, and the world had seen me no more. And the death just avoided was of that very character which I had regarded as fabulous and frivolous in the tales respecting the Inquisition. To the victims of its tyranny there was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral

horrors. I had been reserved for the latter. By long suffering my nerves had been unstrung, until I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for the species of torture which awaited me.

Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall — resolving there to perish rather than risk the terrors of the wells, of which my imagination now pictured many in various positions about the dungeon. In other conditions of mind, I might have had courage to end my misery at once, by a plunge into one of these abysses; but now I was the veriest of cowards. Neither could I forget what I had read of these pits — that the *sudden* extinction of life formed no part of their most horrible plan.

Agitation of spirit kept me awake for many long hours; but at length I again slumbered. Upon arousing, I found by my side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher of water. A burning thirst consumed me, and I emptied the vessel at a draught. It must have been drugged — for scarcely had I drunk, before I became irresistibly drowsy. A deep sleep fell upon me — a sleep like that of death. How long it lasted, of course I know not; but, when once again I unclosed my eyes, the objects around me were visible. By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison.

In its size I had been greatly mistaken. The whole circuit of its walls did not exceed twenty-five yards. For some minutes this fact occasioned me a world of vain trouble; vain indeed — for what could be of less importance, under the terrible circumstances which environed me, than the mere dimensions of my dun-

geon? But my soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied myself in endeavors to account for the error I had committed in my measurement. The truth at length flashed upon me. In my first attempt at exploration I had counted fifty-two paces, up to the period when I fell: I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge; in fact, I had nearly performed the circuit of the vault. I then slept — and, upon awaking, I must have returned upon my steps, thus supposing the circuit nearly double what it actually was. My confusion of mind prevented me from observing that I began my tour with the wall to the left, and ended it with the wall to the right.

I had been deceived, too, in respect to the shape of the enclosure. In feeling my way, I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity; so potent is the effect of total darkness upon one arousing from lethargy or sleep! The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions, or niches, at odd intervals. The general shape of the prison was square. What I had taken for masonry, seemed now to be iron, or some other metal, in huge plates, whose sutures or joints occasioned the depression. The entire surface of this metallic enclosure was rudely daubed in all the hideous and repulsive devices to which the charnel superstition of the monks has given rise. The figures of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms, and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls. I observed that the outlines of these monstrosities were sufficiently distinct, but that the colors seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effects of a damp atmosphere. I now noticed the floor, too, which was of stone. In the

centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped; but it was the only one in the dungeon.

All this I saw indistinctly and by much effort, for my personal condition had been greatly changed during slumber. I now lay upon my back, and at full length, on a species of low framework of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a surcingle. It passed in many convolutions about my limbs and body, leaving at liberty only my head, and my left arm to such extent that I could, by dint of much exertion, supply myself with food from an earthen dish which lay by my side on the floor. I saw, to my horror, that the pitcher had been removed. I say, to my horror — for I was consumed with intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate, for the food in the dish was meat pungently seasoned.

Looking upward, I surveyed the ceiling of my prison. It was some thirty or forty feet overhead, and constructed much as the side walls. In one of its panels a very singular figure riveted my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that, in lieu of a scythe, he held what, at a casual glance, I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. There was something, however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upward at it, (for its position was immediately over my own,) I fancied that I saw it in motion. In an instant afterward the fancy was confirmed. Its sweep was brief, and of course slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear, but more in wonder. Wearied at

length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes upon the other objects in the cell.

A slight noise attracted my notice, and, looking to the floor, I saw several enormous rats traversing it. They had issued from the well, which lay just within view to my right. Even then, while I gazed, they came up in troops, hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this it required much effort and attention to scare them away.

It might have been half an hour, perhaps even an hour, (for I could take but imperfect note of time) before I again cast my eyes upward. What I then saw, confounded and amazed me. The sweep of the pendulum had increased in extent by nearly a yard. As a natural consequence, its velocity was also much greater. But what mainly disturbed me, was the idea that it had perceptibly *descended*. I now observed — with what horror it is needless to say — that its nether extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about a foot in length from horn to horn; the horns upward, and the under edge evidently as keen as that of a razor. Like a razor also, it seemed massy and heavy, tapering from the edge into a solid and broad structure above. It was appended to a weighty rod of brass, and the whole *hissed* as it swung through the air.

I could no longer doubt the doom prepared for me by monkish ingenuity in torture. My cognizance of the pit had become known to the inquisitorial agents — *the pit*, whose horrors had been destined for so bold a recusant as myself — *the pit*, typical of hell, and regarded by rumor as the Ultima Thule of all their punishments. The plunge into this pit I had avoided by the merest of accidents, and I knew that

surprise, or entrapment into torment, formed an important portion of all the grotesquerie of these dungeon deaths. Having failed to fall, it was no part of the demon plan to hurl me into the abyss; and thus (there being no alternative) a different and a milder destruction awaited me. Milder! I half smiled in my agony as I thought of such application of such a term.

What boots it to tell of the long, long hours of horror more than mortal, during which I counted the rushing oscillations of the steel! Inch by inch — line by line — with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages — down and still down it came! Days passed — it might have been that many days passed — ere it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its acrid breath. The odor of the sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils. I prayed — I wearied heaven with my prayer for its more speedy descent. I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful cimeter. And then I fell suddenly calm, and lay smiling at the glittering death, as a child at some rare bawble.

There was another interval of utter insensibility; it was brief; for, upon again lapsing into life, there had been no perceptible descent in the pendulum. But it might have been long; for I knew there were demons who took note of my swoon, and who could have arrested the vibration at pleasure. Upon my recovery, too, I felt very — oh, inexpressibly — sick and weak, as if through long inanition. Even amid the agonies of that period the human nature craved food. With painful effort I outstretched my left arm as far as my bonds permitted, and took possession of the small remnant which had been spared me by the rats. As I put a portion of it within my lips, there rushed to

my mind a half-formed thought of joy — of hope. Yet what business had *I* with hope? It was, as I say, a half-formed thought: man has many such, which are never completed. I felt that it was of joy — of hope; but I felt also that it had perished in its formation. In vain I struggled to perfect — to regain it. Long suffering had nearly annihilated all my ordinary powers of mind. I was an imbecile — an idiot.

The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the serge of my robe — it would return and repeat its operations — again — and again. Notwithstanding its terrifically wide sweep, (some thirty feet or more) and the hissing vigor of its descent, sufficient to sunder these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish. And at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity of attention — as if in so dwelling, I could arrest *here* the descent of the steel. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment — upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge.

Down — steadily down it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right — to the left — far and wide — with the shriek of a damned spirit! to my heart, with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and howled, as the one or the other idea grew predominant.

Down — certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated

within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently — furiously — to free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could reach the latter from the platter beside me to my mouth, with great effort, but no farther. Could I have broken the fastenings above the elbow, I would have seized and attempted to arrest the pendulum. I might as well have attempted to arrest an avalanche!

Down — still unceasingly — still inevitably down! I gasped and struggled at each vibration. I shrunk convulsively at its every sweep. My eyes followed its outward or upward whirls with the eagerness of the most unmeaning despair; they closed themselves spasmodically at the descent, although death would have been a relief, oh, how unspeakable! Still I quivered in every nerve to think how slight a sinking of the machinery would precipitate that keen, glistening axe upon my bosom. It was *hope* that prompted the nerve to quiver — the frame to shrink. It was *hope* — the hope that triumphs on the rack — that whispers to the death-condemned even in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe; and with this observation there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of despair. For the first time during many hours — or perhaps days — I *thought*. It now occurred to me, that the bandage, or surcingle, which enveloped me, was unique. I was tied by no separate cord. The first stroke of the razor-like crescent athwart any portion of the band would so detach it that it might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But how fearful, in that case, the proximity of the steel! The result

of the slightest struggle, how deadly! Was it likely, moreover, that the minions of the torturer had not foreseen and provided for this possibility? Was it probable that the bandage crossed my bosom in the track of the pendulum? Dreading to find my faint, and, as it seemed, my last hope frustrated, I so far elevated my head as to obtain a distinct view of my breast. The surcingle enveloped my limbs and body close in all directions — *save in the path of the destroying crescent.*

Scarcely had I dropped my head back into its original position, when there flashed upon my mind what I cannot better describe than as the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought was now present — feeble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite — but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution.

For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low framework upon which I lay, had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous — their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. "To what food," I thought, "have they been accustomed in the well?"

They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the contents of the dish. I had fallen into an habitual see-saw, or wave of the hand about the platter; and, at length, the unconscious uniformity of the movement deprived it of effect. In their voracity the vermin frequently fastened their sharp fangs in my fingers. With the

particles of the oily and spicy viand which now remained I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still.

At first, the ravenous animals were startled and terrified at the change — at the cessation of movement. They shrank alarmedly back; many sought the well. But this was only for a moment. I had not counted in vain upon their voracity. Observing that I remained without motion, one or two of the boldest leaped upon the framework, and smelt at the surcingle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the well they hurried in fresh troops. They clung to the wood — they overran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my person. The measured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at all. Avoiding its strokes, they busied themselves with the anointed bandage. They pressed — they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust, for which the world has no name, swelled my bosom, and chilled, with a heavy clamminess, my heart. Yet one minute, and I felt that the struggle would be over. Plainly I perceived the loosening of the bandage. I knew that in more than one place it must be already severed. With a more than human resolution I lay *still.*

Nor had I erred in my calculations — nor had I endured in vain. I at length felt that I was *free.* The surcingle hung in ribbons from my body. But the stroke of the pendulum already pressed upon my bosom. It had divided the serge of the robe. It had cut through the linen beneath. Twice again it swung,

and a sharp sense of pain shot through every nerve. But the moment of escape had arrived. At a wave of my hand my deliverers hurried tumultuously away. With a steady movement — cautious, sidelong, shrinking, and slow — I slid from the embrace of the bandage and beyond the reach of the cimeter. For the moment, at least, *I was free.*

Free! — and in the grasp of the Inquisition! I had scarcely stepped from my wooden bed of horror upon the stone floor of the prison, when the motion of the hellish machine ceased, and I beheld it drawn up, by some invisible force, through the ceiling. This was a lesson which I took desperately to heart. My every motion was undoubtedly watched. Free! — I had but escaped death in one form of agony to be delivered unto worse than death in some other. With that thought I rolled my eyes nervously around on the barriers of iron that hemmed me in. Something unusual — some change which, at first, I could not appreciate distinctly — it was obvious, had taken place in the apartment. For many minutes of a dreamy and trembling abstraction I busied myself in vain, unconnected conjecture. During this period, I became aware, for the first time, of the origin of the sulphurous light which illumined the cell. It proceeded from a fissure, about half an inch in width, extending entirely around the prison at the base of the walls, which thus appeared and were completely separated from the floor. I endeavored, but of course in vain, to look through the aperture.

As I arose from the attempt, the mystery of the alteration in the chamber broke at once upon my understanding. I have observed that, although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were suffi-

ciently distinct, yet the colors seemed blurred and indefinite. These colors had now assumed, and were momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and fiendish portraitures an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions, where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.

Unreal! — Even while I breathed there came to my nostrils the breath of the vapor of heated iron! A suffocating odor pervaded the prison! A deeper glow settled each moment in the eyes that glared at my agonies! A richer tint of crimson diffused itself over the pictured horrors of blood. I panted! I gasped for breath! There could be no doubt of the design of my tormentors — oh, most unrelenting! oh, most demoniac of men! I shrank from the glowing metal to the centre of the cell. Amid the thought of the fiery destruction that impended, the idea of the coolness of the well came over my soul like balm. I rushed to its deadly brink. I threw my straining vision below. The glare from the enkindled roof illumined its inmost recesses. Yet, for a wild moment, did my spirit refuse to comprehend the meaning of what I saw. At length it forced — it wrestled its way into my soul — it burned itself in upon my shuddering reason. Oh, for a voice to speak! — oh, horror! — oh, any horror but this! With a shriek, I rushed from the margin, and buried my face in my hands — weeping bitterly.

The heat rapidly increased, and once again I looked up, shuddering as with a fit of the ague. There had

been a second change in the cell — and now the change was obviously in the *form*. As before, it was in vain that I at first endeavored to appreciate or understand what was taking place. But not long was I left in doubt. The Inquisitorial vengeance had been hurried by my two-fold escape, and there was to be no more dallying with the King of Terrors. The room had been square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute — two, consequently, obtuse. The fearful difference quickly increased with a low rumbling or moaning sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a lozenge. But the alteration stopped not here — I neither hoped nor desired it to stop. I could have clasped the red walls to my bosom as a garment of eternal peace. "Death," I said, "any death but that of the pit!" Fool! might I not have known that *into the pit* it was the object of the burning iron to urge me? Could I resist its glow? or if even that, could I withstand its pressure? And now, flatter and flatter grew the lozenge, with a rapidity that left me no time for contemplation. Its centre, and, of course, its greatest width, came just over the yawning gulf. I shrank back — but the closing walls pressed me resistlessly onward. At length for my seared and writhing body there was no longer an inch of foothold on the firm floor of the prison. I struggled no more, but the agony of my soul found vent in one loud, long, and final scream of despair. I felt that I tottered upon the brink — I averted my eyes —

There was a discordant hum of human voices! There was a loud blast as of many trumpets! There was a harsh grating as of a thousand thunders! The

fiery walls rushed back! An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss. It was that of General Lasalle. The French army had entered Toledo. The Inquisition was in the hands of its enemies.

HOP-FROG

(FRANCE)

I NEVER knew any one so keenly alive to a joke as the king was. He seemed to live only for joking. To tell a good story of the joke kind, and to tell it well, was the surest road to his favor. Thus it happened that his seven ministers were all noted for their accomplishments as jokers. They all took after the king, too, in being large, corpulent, oily men, as well as inimitable jokers. Whether people grow fat by joking, or whether there is something in fat itself which predisposes to a joke, I have never been quite able to determine; but certain it is that a lean joker is a *rara avis in terris*.

About the refinements, or, as he called them, the "ghosts" of wit, the king troubled himself very little. He had an especial admiration for breadth in a jest, and would often put up with length, for the sake of it. Over-niceties wearied him. He would have preferred Rabelais's *Gargantua* to the *Zadig* of Voltaire; and, upon the whole, practical jokes suited his taste far better than verbal ones.

At the date of my narrative, professing jesters had not altogether gone out of fashion at court. Several of the great continental "powers" still retained their "fools," who wore motley, with caps and bells, and

who were expected to be always ready with sharp witticisms, at a moment's notice, in consideration of the crumbs that fell from the royal table.

Our king, as a matter of course, retained his "fool." The fact is, he required something in the way of folly, if only to counterbalance the heavy wisdom of the seven wise men who were his ministers — not to mention himself.

His fool, or professional jester, was not only a fool, however. His value was trebled in the eyes of the king by the fact of his being also a dwarf and a cripple. Dwarfs were as common at court, in those days, as fools; and many monarchs would have found it difficult to get through their days (days are rather longer at court than elsewhere) without both a jester to laugh *with* and a dwarf to laugh *at*. But, as I have already observed, your jesters, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, are fat, round and unwieldy — so that it was no small source of self-gratulation with our king that, in Hop-Frog, (this was the fool's name) he possessed a triplicate treasure in one person.

I believe the name "Hop-Frog" was not that given to the dwarf by his sponsors at baptism, but it was conferred upon him, by general consent of the seven ministers, on account of his inability to walk as other men do. In fact, Hop-Frog could only get along by a sort of interjectional gait — something between a leap and a wriggle — a movement that afforded illimitable amusement, and of course consolation, to the king, for (notwithstanding the protuberance of his stomach and a constitutional swelling of the head) the king, by his whole court, was accounted a capital figure.

But although Hop-Frog, through the distortion of his legs, could move only with great pain and difficulty along a road or floor, the prodigious muscular power which nature seemed to have bestowed upon his arms, by way of compensation for deficiency in the lower limbs, enabled him to perform many feats of wonderful dexterity, where trees or ropes were in question, or anything else to climb. At such exercises he certainly much more resembled a squirrel, or a small monkey, than a frog.

I am not able to say, with precision, from what country Hop-Frog originally came. It was from some barbarous region, however, that no person ever heard of — a vast distance from the court of our king. Hop-Frog, and a young girl very little less dwarfish than himself, (although of exquisite proportions, and a marvellous dancer) had been forcibly carried off from their respective homes in adjoining provinces, and sent as presents to the king, by one of his ever-victorious generals.

Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that a close intimacy arose between the two little captives. Indeed, they soon became sworn friends. Hop-Frog, who, although he made a great deal of sport, was by no means popular, had it not in his power to render Trippetta many services, but she, on account of her grace and exquisite beauty (although a dwarf) was universally admired and petted; so she possessed much influence, and never failed to use it, whenever she could, for the benefit of Hop-Frog.

On some grand state occasion — I forget what — the king determined to have a masquerade; and whenever a masquerade, or anything of that kind, occurred at our court, then the talents both of Hop-

Frog and Trippetta were sure to be called in play. Hop-Frog, in especial, was so inventive in the way of getting up pageants, suggesting novel characters, and arranging costume, for masked balls, that nothing could be done, it seems, without his assistance.

The night appointed for the *fête* had arrived. A gorgeous hall had been fitted up, under Trippetta's eye, with every kind of device which could possibly give *éclat* to a masquerade. The whole court was in a fever of expectation. As for costumes and characters, it might well be supposed that everybody had come to a decision on such points. Many had made up their minds (as to what *rôles* they should assume) a week, or even a month, in advance; and, in fact, there was not a particle of indecision anywhere — except in the case of the king and his seven ministers. Why they hesitated I never could tell, unless they did it by way of a joke. More probably they found it difficult, on account of being so fat, to make up their minds. At all events, time flew; and, as a last resource, they sent for Trippetta and Hop-Frog.

When the two little friends obeyed the summons of the king, they found him sitting at his wine with the seven members of his cabinet council; but the monarch appeared to be in a very ill humor. He knew that Hop-Frog was not fond of wine; for it excited the poor cripple almost to madness; and madness is no comfortable feeling. But the king loved his practical jokes, and took pleasure in forcing Hop-Frog to drink and (as the king called it) "to be merry."

"Come here, Hop-Frog," said he, as the jester and his friend entered the room; "swallow this bumper to the health of your absent friends," (here Hop-Frog

sighed) "and then let us have the benefit of your invention. We want characters — *characters*, man — something novel — out of the way. We are wearied with this everlasting sameness. Come, drink! the wine will brighten your wits."

Hop-Frog endeavored, as usual, to get up a jest in reply to these advances from the king; but the effort was too much. It happened to be the poor dwarf's birthday, and the command to drink to his "absent friends" forced the tears to his eyes. Many large, bitter drops fell into the goblet as he took it humbly from the hand of the tyrant.

"Ah! ha! ha! ha!" roared the latter, as the dwarf reluctantly drained the beaker. "See what a glass of good wine can do! Why, your eyes are shining already!"

Poor fellow! his large eyes gleamed rather than shone; for the effect of wine on his excitable brain was not more powerful than instantaneous. He placed the goblet nervously on the table, and looked round upon the company with a half-insane stare. They all seemed highly amused at the success of the king's "joke."

"And now to business," said the prime minister, a *very* fat man.

"Yes," said the king; "come, Hop-Frog, lend us your assistance. Characters, my fine fellow; we stand in need of characters — all of us — ha! ha! ha!" and as this was seriously meant for a joke, his laugh was chorused by the seven.

Hop-Frog also laughed, although feebly and somewhat vacantly.

"Come, come," said the king, impatiently, "have you nothing to suggest?"

"I am endeavoring to think of something *novel*," replied the dwarf, abstractedly, for he was quite bewildered by the wine.

"Endeavoring!" cried the tyrant, fiercely; "what do you mean by that? Ah, I perceive. You are sulky, and want more wine. Here, drink this!" and he poured out another gobletful and offered it to the cripple, who merely gazed at it, gasping for breath.

"Drink, I say!" shouted the monster, "or by the fiends—"

The dwarf hesitated. The king grew purple with rage. The courtiers smirked. Trippetta, pale as a corpse, advanced to the monarch's seat, and, falling on her knees before him, implored him to spare her friend.

The tyrant regarded her for some moments, in evident wonder at her audacity. He seemed quite at a loss what to do or say—how most becomingly to express his indignation. At last, without uttering a syllable, he pushed her violently from him, and threw the contents of the brimming goblet in her face.

The poor girl got up as best she could, and, not daring even to sigh, resumed her position at the foot of the table.

There was a dead silence for about a half a minute, during which the falling of a leaf, or of a feather, might have been heard. It was interrupted by a low, but harsh and protracted *grating* sound, which seemed to come at once from every corner of the room.

"What—what—*what* are you making that noise for?" demanded the king, turning furiously to the dwarf.

The latter seemed to have recovered, in great measure, from his intoxication, and, looking fixedly but quietly into the tyrant's face, merely ejaculated: —

"I — I? How could it have been me?"

"The sound appeared to come from without," observed one of the courtiers. "I fancy it was the parrot at the window, whetting his bill upon his cage-wires."

"True," replied the monarch, as if much relieved by the suggestion; "but, on the honor of a knight, I could have sworn that it was the gritting of this vagabond's teeth."

Hereupon the dwarf laughed, (the king was too confirmed a joker to object to any one's laughing) and displayed a set of large, powerful, and very repulsive teeth. Moreover, he avowed his perfect willingness to swallow as much wine as desired. The monarch was pacified; and having drained another bumper with no very perceptible ill effect, Hop-Frog entered at once, and with spirit, into the plans for the masquerade.

"I cannot tell what was the association of idea," observed he, very tranquilly, and as if he had never tasted wine in his life, "but just after your majesty had struck the girl and thrown the wine in her face — *just after* your majesty had done this, and while the parrot was making that odd noise outside the window, there came into my mind a capital diversion — one of my own country frolics — often enacted among us, at our masquerades; but here it will be new altogether. Unfortunately, however, it requires a company of eight persons, and — "

"Here we *are!*" cried the king, laughing at his acute discovery of the coincidence; "eight to a frac-

tion — I and my seven ministers. Come! what is the diversion?"

"We call it," replied the cripple, "the Eight Chained Ourang-Outangs, and it really is excellent sport if well enacted."

"*We* will enact it," remarked the king, drawing himself up, and lowering his eyelids.

"The beauty of the game," continued Hop-Frog, "lies in the fright it occasions among the women."

"Capital!" roared in chorus the monarch and his ministry.

"*I* will equip you as ourang-outangs," proceeded the dwarf; "leave all that to me. The resemblance shall be so striking that the company of masqueraders will take you for real beasts — and, of course, they will be as much terrified as astonished."

"Oh, this is exquisite!" exclaimed the king. "Hop-Frog! I will make a man of you."

"The chains are for the purpose of increasing the confusion by their jangling. You are supposed to have escaped, *en masse*, from your keepers. Your majesty cannot conceive the effect produced, at a masquerade, by eight chained ourang-outangs, imagined to be real ones by most of the company, and rushing in with savage cries among the crowd of delicately and gorgeously habited men and women. The *contrast* is inimitable."

"It *must* be," said the king; and the council arose hurriedly (as it was growing late) to put in execution the scheme of Hop-Frog.

His mode of equipping the party as ourang-outangs was very simple, but effective enough for his purposes. The animals in question had, at the epoch of my story,

very rarely been seen in any part of the civilized world; and as the imitations made by the dwarf were sufficiently beast-like and more than sufficiently hideous, their truthfulness to nature was thus thought to be secured.

The king and his ministers were first encased in tight-fitting stockinet shirts and drawers. They were then saturated with tar. At this stage of the process, some one of the party suggested feathers; but the suggestion was at once overruled by the dwarf, who soon convinced the eight, by ocular demonstration, that the hair of such a brute as the ourang-outang was much more efficiently represented by *flax*. A thick coating of the latter was accordingly plastered upon the coating of tar. A long chain was now procured. First, it was passed about the waist of the king, *and tied;* then about another of the party, and also tied; then about all successively, in the same manner. When this chaining arrangement was complete and the party stood as far apart from each other as possible, they formed a circle; and to make all things appear natural, Hop-Frog passed the residue of the chain, in two diameters, at right angles, across the circle, after the fashion adopted, at the present day, by those who capture chimpanzees, or other large apes, in Borneo.

The grand saloon, in which the masquerade was to take place, was a circular room, very lofty, and receiving the light of the sun only through a single window at top. At night (the season for which the apartment was especially designed) it was illuminated principally by a large chandelier, depending by a chain from the centre of the sky-light, and lowered, or elevated, by means of a counter-balance as usual; but (in order

not to look unsightly) this latter passed outside the cupola and over the roof.

The arrangements of the room had been left to Trippetta's superintendence; but, in some particulars, it seems, she had been guided by the calmer judgment of her friend the dwarf. At his suggestion it was that, on this occasion, the chandelier was removed. Its waxen drippings (which, in weather so warm, it was quite impossible to prevent) would have been seriously detrimental to the rich dresses of the guests, who, on account of the crowded state of the saloon, could not *all* be expected to keep from out its centre — that is to say, from under the chandelier. Additional sconces were set in various parts of the hall, out of the way; and a flambeau, emitting sweet odor, was placed in the right hand of each of the Caryatides that stood against the wall — some fifty or sixty altogether.

The eight ourang-outangs, taking Hop-Frog's advice, waited patiently until midnight (when the room was thoroughly filled with masqueraders) before making their appearance. No sooner had the clock ceased striking, however, than they rushed, or rather rolled in, all together — for the impediment of their chains caused most of the party to fall, and all to stumble as they entered.

The excitement among the masqueraders was prodigious, and filled the heart of the king with glee. As had been anticipated, there were not a few of the guests who supposed the ferocious-looking creatures to be beasts of some kind in reality, if not precisely ourang-outangs. Many of the women swooned with affright; and had not the king taken the precaution to exclude all weapons from the saloon, his party

might soon have expiated their frolic in their blood. As it was, a general rush was made for the doors; but the king had ordered them to be locked immediately upon his entrance; and, at the dwarf's suggestion, the keys had been deposited with *him*.

While the tumult was at its height, and each masquerader attentive only to his own safety, (for, in fact, there was much real danger from the pressure of the excited crowd) the chain by which the chandelier ordinarily hung, and which had been drawn up on its removal, might have been seen very gradually to descend, until its hooked extremity came within three feet of the floor.

Soon after this, the king and his seven friends, having reeled about the hall in all directions, found themselves at length in its centre, and of course in immediate contact with the chain. While they were thus situated, the dwarf, who had followed closely at their heels, inciting them to keep up the commotion, took hold of their own chain at the intersection of the two portions which crossed the circle diametrically and at right angles. Here, with the rapidity of thought, he inserted the hook from which the chandelier had been wont to depend; and in an instant, by some unseen agency, the chandelier-chain was drawn so far upward as to take the hook out of reach, and, as an inevitable consequence, to drag the ourang-outangs together in close connection, and face to face.

The masqueraders, by this time, had recovered in some measure from their alarm; and, beginning to regard the whole matter as a well-contrived pleasantry, set up a loud shout of laughter at the predicament of the apes.

"Leave them to *me!*" now screamed Hop-Frog, his shrill voice making itself easily heard through all the din. "Leave them to *me*. I fancy *I* know them. If I can only get a good look at them, *I* can soon tell who they are."

Here, scrambling over the heads of the crowd, he managed to get to the wall; when, seizing a flambeau from one of the Caryatides, he returned, as he went, to the centre of the room — leaped, with the agility of a monkey, upon the king's head — and thence clambered a few feet up the chain — holding down the torch to examine the group of ourang-outangs, and still screaming, "*I* shall soon find out who they are!"

And now, while the whole assembly (the apes included) were convulsed with laughter, the jester suddenly uttered a shrill whistle, when the chain flew violently up for about thirty feet — dragging with it the dismayed and struggling ourang-outangs, and leaving them suspended in mid-air between the skylight and the floor. Hop-Frog, clinging to the chain as it rose, still maintained his relative position in respect to the eight maskers, and still (as if nothing were the matter) continued to thrust his torch down towards them, as though endeavoring to discover who they were.

So thoroughly astonished were the whole company at this ascent that a dead silence, of about a minute's duration, ensued. It was broken by just such a low, harsh, *grating* sound as had before attracted the attention of the king and his councillors, when the former threw the wine in the face of Trippetta. But, on the present occasion, there could be no question as to whence the sound issued. It came from the fang-like teeth of the dwarf, who ground them and gnashed

them as he foamed at the mouth, and glared, with an expression of maniacal rage, into the upturned countenances of the king and his seven companions.

"Ah, ha!" said at length the infuriated jester. "Ah, ha! I begin to see who these people *are*, now!" Here, pretending to scrutinize the king more closely, he held the flambeau to the flaxen coat which enveloped him, and which instantly burst into a sheet of vivid flame. In less than half a minute the whole eight ourang-outangs were blazing fiercely, amid the shrieks of the multitude, who gazed at them from below, horror-stricken, and without the power to render them the slightest assistance.

At length the flames, suddenly increasing in virulence, forced the jester to climb higher up the chain, to be out of their reach; and, as he made this movement, the crowd again sank, for a brief instant, into silence. The dwarf seized his opportunity, and once more spoke:—

"I now see *distinctly*," he said, "what manner of people these maskers are. They are a great king and his seven privy-councillors — a king who does not scruple to strike a defenceless girl, and his seven councillors who abet him in the outrage. As for myself, I am simply Hop-Frog, the jester — and *this is my last jest*."

Owing to the high combustibility of both the flax and the tar to which it adhered, the dwarf had scarcely made an end of his brief speech before the work of vengeance was complete. The eight corpses swung in their chains, a fetid, blackened, hideous, and indistinguishable mass. The cripple hurled his torch at them, clambered leisurely to the ceiling, and disappeared through the sky-light.

It is supposed that Trippetta, stationed on the roof of the saloon, had been the accomplice of her friend in his fiery revenge, and that, together, they effected their escape to their own country; for neither was seen again.

END OF VOL. I

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